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	HA-09	H-01	INRE-00	INR-01	L-03	ADS-00	NRRC-01
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 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3693
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 AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BUENOS AIRES 01718

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
 TAGS: PREL, PARM, MARR, MASS, AR
 SUBJECT: SECDEF MEETING WITH ARGENTINE CONGRESSIONAL
 DEFENSE COMMITTEES

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT

SUMMARY

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2. SECRETARY CHENEY HELD AN INFORMAL DISCUSSION WITH
 THE CONGRESSIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEES FEBRUARY 20.
 OPPOSITION MEMBERS CRITICIZED U.S. PRESSURE TO
 TERMINATE THE CONDOR PROGRAM AND BLOCK SHIPMENT OF
 NUCLEAR PRODUCTS TO IRAN AND QUESTIONED THE
 DESIRABILITY OF SENDING AN ARGENTINE SHIP TO THE GULF
 TO UNSEAT SADDAM. OTHERS ASKED FOR U.S. PURCHASE OF
 THE "PAMPA" AIRCRAFT AND INCREASED ANTI-NARCOTICS
 ASSISTANCE. THE SECRETARY EXPLAINED U.S. POLICIES AND
 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

REVIEW AUTHORITY: JOHN L MILLS
 DATE/CASE ID: 14 APR 2004 200204072

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DEFENSE ASSISTANCE TO ARGENTINA. THE MEETING'S ATMOSPHERE HOWEVER APPEARED TO BE FRIENDLY AND CONSTRUCTIVE ALTHOUGH THERE WERE SOME DIFFERENCES AMONG THE ARGENTINE LEGISLATORS OVER OPPOSITION MEMBERS WHO GRABBED TOO MUCH TIME. SUBSEQUENT COMMENTS BY LEGISLATORS FROM GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION WERE HIGHLY APPRECIATIVE OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO THE COMMITTEES.

SECRETARY SETS SCENE

3. SECRETARY CHENEY, ACCOMPANIED BY MOD ERMAN GONZALEZ, THE AMBASSADOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CHENEY PARTY AND EMBASSY, MET WITH THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF DEPUTIES DEFENSE COMMITTEES FEBRUARY 20. THE MEETING WAS INFORMAL, CONSISTING LARGELY OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS. THE SECRETARY OPENED THE SESSION BY REVIEWING BRIEFLY THE PURPOSE OF HIS TRIP, WHICH

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INCLUDED "A DESIRE TO THANK ARGENTINA FOR ITS PARTICIPATION IN THE GULF". HE EXPLAINED THAT CHANGED WORLD CONDITIONS PERMIT THE U.S. TO RESTRUCTURE ITS FORCES, MAINTAINING LOWER NUMBERS OVERSEAS AND BEING PREPARED TO DEAL WITH REGIONAL CONTINGENCIES. THERE WILL REMAIN THE PROBLEM OF PROLIFERATION OF MISSILE TECHNOLOGY, HE SAID, WELCOMING ARGENTINA'S REGIONAL INITIATIVE BANNING CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS. HE LOOKED FORWARD TO WORKING WITH ARGENTINA, BUILDING ON RELATIONS ESTABLISHED DURING GULF OPERATIONS.

OPPOSITION CONCERN ON IRAQ

4. FOLLOWING SENATE DEFENSE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BRAVO HERRERA'S (GOVERNING JUSTICIALISTA PARTY - PJ) WELCOMING STATEMENT AND AGREEMENT WITH THE NEED TO COOPERATE TO HALT IRAQI AGGRESSION, OPPOSITION RADICAL PARTY (UCR) SENATOR LUIS LEON LISTED CONCERNS WITH U.S. PRESSURE ON ARGENTINA: (1) TO USE AN ARGENTINE SHIP NOW TO STRENGTHEN THE BLOCKADE ON IRAQ "BECAUSE WE DIDN'T PRESS SUFFICIENTLY ON SADDAM TO REMOVE HIM;" (2) TO ABANDON THE CONDOR PROJECT, INCLUDING SENDING AN INSPECTION TEAM, THEREBY INFRINGING ON ARGENTINE INDEPENDENCE; AND (3) TO SUSPEND THE SALE OF NUCLEAR

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MATERIALS TO IRAN.

5. THE SECRETARY RESPONDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT MADE A SOUND DECISION ON CONDOR, TAKEN AS A SOVEREIGN POWER. HE DIFFERED WITH THE SENATOR ON THE GULF, POINTING OUT THAT THE REMOVAL OF SADDAM HAD NOT BEEN ONE OF THE

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OBJECTIVES OF GULF OPERATIONS. FOCUSING ON THE CURRENT SITUATION, THE COALITION WAS SUCCESSFUL IN IMPLEMENTING UNSC RESOLUTIONS -- USING FORCE TO LIBERATE KUWAIT AND STRIPPING SADDAM OF HIS OFFENSIVE POWER. IT IS IMPORTANT TO IMPLEMENT UNSC RESOLUTIONS, UNDER WHICH SADDAM PROMISED TO DESTROY HIS WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION AND COOPERATE WITH INSPECTIONS. WE HAVE MAINTAINED SANCTIONS ON IRAQ, SAID CHENEY, AND NEED TO CONTINUE THIS POLICY. WE HAVE ENCOURAGED PARTICIPATION OF OTHER COALITION MEMBERS IN SANCTION ENFORCEMENT IN ORDER TO MAKE IT A MULTINATIONAL FORCE, HE CONCLUDED.

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6. HOUSE OF DEPUTIES DEFENSE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MIGUEL TOMA (PJ) POINTED OUT THAT THE DECISION TO SEND AN ARGENTINE SHIP TO THE GULF LAST YEAR WAS NOT SHARED BY ALL. IT WAS, HOWEVER, A DEMOCRATIC DECISION TAKEN TO PRESERVE INTERNATIONAL LAW AS A MEANS OF SETTLING

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POLITICAL DISPUTES. IT WAS NOT DONE, HE SAID, WITH POLITICAL OR COMMERCIAL MOTIVES.

ARGENTINE TECHNICAL CAPACITY

7. UCR SECOND VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE, DIPUTADO CONRADO STORANI, EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT CANCELLATION OF THE CONDOR PROJECT UNDER U.S. PRESSURE CAUSING A LOSS OF CAPACITY FOR A PEACEFUL SATELLITE LAUNCH PROGRAM. HE MADE A STRONG PITCH FOR MAINTAINING CORDOBA-BASED (HE IS FROM CORDOBA) "PAMPA" AIRCRAFT PRODUCTION FACILITIES. CHAIRMAN TOMA LATER ENDORSED THE PAMPA "IN THE NAME OF THE CONGRESS" AND URGED THE U.S. TO PURCHASE THE "HIGH QUALITY" JET TRAINER AS A DEMONSTRATION OF MUTUAL DEFENSE COOPERATION.

8. SECRETARY CHENEY WELCOMED THE ARGENTINE BID AS PARTNER WITH A U.S. FIRM, ALONG WITH OTHER BIDS, FOR THE CONTRACT FOR 800 TRAINER AIRCRAFT AS IT NOW STANDS. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE BIDS ARE TO BE RECEIVED IN 1993 AND A DECISION MADE IN 1994.

MILITARY COOPERATION

9. SENATOR EDUARDO VACA (PJ) INQUIRED ABOUT U.S.-ARGENTINE DEFENSE RELATIONS AND COOPERATION. THE

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SECRETARY CHARACTERIZED MILITARY-TO-MILITARY RELATIONS AS GOOD AND TERMED MILITARY EXCHANGES AND JOINT EXERCISES AS VERY POSITIVE. THEY SHOULD BE CONTINUED. HE SAID THAT THE U.S. IS ALSO PREPARED, WHEN APPROPRIATE AND POSSIBLE WITHIN U.S. BUDGET CONSTRAINTS, TO HELP WITH SOME ARGENTINE EQUIPMENT NEEDS. FOR EXAMPLE, AS HE HAD DISCUSSED WITH MINISTER GONZALEZ, THE U.S. HAD ARRANGED TO SUPPLY TWO U.S. SHIPS TO ARGENTINA: AN OILER WITH CAPACITY TO OPERATE IN ARCTIC WATERS AND AN AUXILIARY VESSEL. FOUR C-130'S ARE TO BE REWINGED AND 2 C-130'S WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE FROM U.S. SURPLUS (EDA). THESE ARE MODEST STEPS, CONSIDERING THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY ARGENTINE ARMED FORCES, HE SAID, BUT IT IS EVIDENCE OF U.S. DESIRE TO WORK WITH ARGENTINA.

ANTI-NARCOTICS

10. DIPUTADO STORANI (UCR), SENATOR HECTOR VELAZQUEZ (UCR) AND DIPUTADO TOMA (PJ) ASKED FOR U.S. VIEWS ON ANTI-NARCOTICS. TOMA EMPHASIZED THE DISTINCTION ARGENTINA MAKES BETWEEN INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES, WHICH PRIMARILY CONDUCT THE ANTI-NARCOTICS FIGHT, AND THE REGULAR ARMED FORCES. HE ENDORSED THE USG'S APPROACH TO THE FIGHT WITHIN THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK EXPLAINED BY THE SECRETARY (PARA 11 BELOW). VELASQUEZ MADE AN IMPASSIONED PLEA FOR MORE ANTI-NARCOTICS ASSISTANCE FROM THE USG.

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11. SECRETARY CHENEY REVIEWED THE INITIAL RELUCTANCE OF THE ARMED FORCES TO BECOME INVOLVED IN ANTI-NARCOTICS ACTIVITIES BUT UNDERLINED THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROBLEM WHICH JUSTIFIED ARMED FORCES PARTICIPATION IN THE FIGHT. HE REFERRED TO THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN NARCO-TRAFFICKERS AND GUERRILAS WHICH GUATEMALAN PRESIDENT SERRANO HAD DESCRIBED. U.S. ARMED FORCES SUPPORT LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL WITH MONITORING DRUG TRAFFICKING, INTELLIGENCE, LOGISTICS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COORDINATION. EACH COUNTRY MUST DECIDE WITHIN ITS OWN CONSTITUTIONAL SITUATION HOW IT WILL CONDUCT THE ANTI-NARCOTICS FIGHT. HE CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT THE U.S. WILL LOOK FOR WAYS TO

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COOPERATE WITH THE APPROPRIATE ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES
TO ELIMINATE THE SCOURGE OF DRUGS.

COMMENT

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12. THAT THE OPPOSITION TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE
SECRETARY'S MEETING IN CONGRESS TO STAKE OUT ITS
POSITIONS SEEMED TO BE ACCEPTED BY ALL, ALTHOUGH THERE
WAS SOME JUSTICIALIST RESENTMENT AT MONOPOLIZATION OF
TIME BY THE RADICALS. ALL PARTIES GREATLY APPRECIATED
THE SECRETARY'S GESTURE TOWARD THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC
CONTROL OF THE MILITARY.

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