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Department of State AR133

INCOMING TELEGRAM

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R 052048Z JUL 78 FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6376

BUENOS AIRES 5169

DECAPTIONED

E.O. 11652 GDS TAGS SHUM, AR SUBJECT HUMAN RIGHTS; AMBASSADOR'S CHAT WITH FONMIN

1. I MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER MONTES AT 10:00 AT HIS OFFICE TODAY (WED) JULY 5 REFERENCE MY CONSULTATION TRIP TO DEPT WITHIN A FEW DAYS. HE RECEIVED ME COURTEOUSLY BUT HIS SOMBER MOOD INDICATED HIS UNHAPPINESS. HE AVOIDED ANY PRELIMINARY CHIT CHAT AND ASKED WHAT I HAD IN MIND.
2. I INQUIRED ABOUT HIS RECENT WASHINGTON VISIT TO WHICH HE REPLIED IN SUCCINCT AND CLEAR LANGUAGE AS FOLLOWS: MONTES DESCRIBED HIS WASHINGTON TRIP A "FIASCO". HE STATED UNFORTUNATELY ARGENTINA IS LOOKED UPON AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT LEVEL AS A THIRD RATE COUNTRY. WITHOUT MENTIONING ANY SPECIFIC COUNTRY, HE ADDED MOST LA COUNTRIES RECEIVE ALL EXPECTED COURTESIES BUT MONTES EMPHASIZED IN HIS JUDGEMENT ARGENTINA DOES NOT. IT WAS APPARENT HE WAS ALLUDING TO HIS INABILITY TO MEET WITH SECRETARY VANCE.
3. MONTES THEN PROCEEDED TO DESCRIBE THE NEWSOM-ALLARA MEETING AS A DISASTER. HE THEN EMPHATICALLY STATED ARGENTINA IS NOW FULLY CONVINCED IT CANNOT DO BUSINESS WITH THE USG, AND INSTEAD GOA IS MOVING TOWARDS JAPAN AND OTHER POWERS WHERE THEIR DIGNITY IS RESPECTED AND APPRECIATED. COMMENT: I HAVE NEVER SEEN THE FOREIGN MINISTER AS SOLEMN AS WHEN HE MADE THIS STATEMENT. HE WAS JUST DEAD SERIOUS. END COMMENT. I THEN INTERJECTED TELLING MONTES THAT USG WANTED TO CONTINUE ITS TRADITIONAL FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH ARGENTINA. I EXPLAINED TO HIM OF THE DIFFERENT ROLES PLAYED BY THE EXECUTIVE, CONGRESS AND THE GENERAL AMERICAN PUBLIC. MONTES EXPRESSED HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE HUMPHREY/KENNEDY AMENDMENT AND ALSO THE HARKINS AMENDMENT. MONTES SAID HE APPRECIATED THE PRESSURES FACED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT BUT THAT THIS DIDN'T CHANGE THE END RESULT AS FAR AS GOA-US RELATIONS WENT.
4. MONTES ALSO SAID HE ALSO APPRECIATED MY SITUATION AS BEING "ENTRE LA ESPADA Y LA PARED" - I.E., BETWEEN "THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA". HE ADDED HE REGRETTED SEEING GOA-US RELATIONS AT SUCH A LOW EBB BUT HE FEARED THIS WAS ONE OF THE UNHAPPIEST SITUATIONS HE HAD EXPERIENCED IN HIS CAREER AS FOREIGN MINISTER.
5. I TOLD MONTES DIALOGUE BETWEEN HIS OFFICE AND IAIRC WAS VERY MUCH THEIR PRIVATE DOMAIN. I EMPHASIZED THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD WE WANT TO VIOLATE THAT RELATIONSHIP. HE REPLIED SAYING THAT THE INVITATION HAD BEEN EXTENDED TO IAIRC BUT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION REPLIED WITH A SERIES OF NINE QUESTIONS. I INQUIRED IF THESE QUESTIONS PRESENTED A PROBLEM. MONTES ANSWERED BY SAYING HE FELT INTERROGATORIES WERE NOT MADE IN GOOD FAITH. I THEN QUESTIONED IF IT WAN'T TRUE THAT INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AS WELL AS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL HAD ACCESS TO PRISONS. HE REPLIED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. MONTES THEN STATED DECISION OF WHETHER OR NOT TO COMPLY WITH IAIRC REQUEST WAS UP TO PRESIDENT VIDELA. HE TOLD HE HE HAD AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE PRESIDENT WITHIN A HALF HOUR.
6. I STRESSED TO MONTES THAT TIME WAS OF THE ESSENCE. I ADDED OCTOBER 1 WAS A DATE MOST FAMILIAR TO ALL MILITARY BRANCHES.

HE AGREED. I SUGGESTED A SERIOUS EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO COME TO TERMS WITH IAIRC. I EMPHASIZED MILITARY TRAINING WAS VERY MUCH CONTINGENT ON ACCEPTANCE OF THE GOA INVITATION BY IAIRC. I ALSO EXPLAINED THERE WAS NO NEED TO WAIT UNTIL OCTOBER 25, BUT COMMUNICATION COULD BE HAD WITH IAIRC AS SOON AS TOMORROW OR THE NEXT DAY. MONTES AGAIN REPEATED IT WAS UP TO PRESIDENT VIDELA TO MAKE FINAL DECISION.

7. THROUGHOUT OUR CONVERSATION MONTES KEPT REPEATING IT WAS JUST IMPOSSIBLE TO DO BUSINESS WITH USG AND THE GOA MUST GO ELSEWHERE TO MEET ITS NEEDS.

8. I CONCLUDED BY STATING USG WISHES TO HAVE FRIENDLY AND PRODUCTIVE RELATIONS WITH ARGENTINA BUT THERE WERE STRONG PRESSURES FROM CONGRESS AND THE GENERAL AMERICAN PUBLIC. MONTES THEN STATED HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND HOW THE STATE DEPARTMENT COULD MEET WITH OSCAR ALLENDE, A TREACHEROUS POLITICAL HACK AND A RENOWNED ANTI-AMERICAN. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID ALLENDE MEETS WITH UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM FOR FIFTY-FIVE MINUTES AND WE, THE ARGENTINES, HAVE TO BE TO MEET WITH ANY ONE HIGHER THAN A MINOR OFFICIAL. HE SAID HE FELT THE STATE DEPARTMENT VALUES AND PRIORITIES WERE DISTORTED.

9. MONTES' FINAL STATEMENT WAS THERE MUST BE A RETURN TO A RULE OF LAW IN ARGENTINA. HE SAID "I RECOGNIZE WE CAN'T CONTINUE WITH SAME OPERATIONAL METHODS USED WHEN TERRORISTS WERE IN THEIR FULL BLOOM". HE CONCLUDED SAYING "ARGENTINA IS MOVING TO A GOVERNMENT OF LAWS PERHAPS NOT AS FAST AS WERE EXPECTED TO BY OTHERS."

10. AT A MILITARY CEREMONY AT NOON I RAN INTO GENERAL VIOLA. HE SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED GOA-US RELATIONS WITH PRESIDENT VIDELA AND HE HAD SOME COMMENTS FOR ME FROM VIDELA. I SHALL MEET WITH VIOLA AT 1800 TODAY (WED).

11. LATER I MET UNDER SECRETARY ALLARA AT VENEZUELAN INDEPENDENCE DAY RECEPTION. HE CORNERED ME AND TOLD ME THE MEETING WITH NEWSOM WAS AN UTTER FAILURE. HE SAID USG HAD BEEN APPLYING HUMPHREY/KENNEDY BILL BEFORE IT TAKES EFFECT. HE STRESSED THIS WAS NOT A GESTURE OF FRIENDSHIP FROM A COUNTRY PROFESSING TO BE A FRIEND. ALLARA EMOTIONALLY SAID I ALWAYS TOLD GOA OF OUR DESIRE TO KEEP STRONG FRIENDLY TIES WITH THEM, BUT THE NEW HARKIN AMENDMENT IS NOT YET IN EFFECT AND ALREADY USG HAS INSTRUCTED EXIM BANK NOT TO HONOR GOA REQUESTS BECAUSE OF POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF HARKIN AMENDMENT. ALLARA LOOKED AT ME STERNLY AND SAID YOU TELL ME AND MY GOVERNMENT THE USG IS NOT ARBITRARY AND YET YOUR GOVERNMENT IS APPLYING LAWS THAT ARE NOT YET IN EFFECT.

12. IT BECAME OBVIOUS TO RECEPTION GUESTS THAT ALLARA AND I WERE HAVING A SERIOUS DISCUSSION SO WE FELT IT BEST NOT TO CONTINUE. I AGREED TO MEET WITH HIM ON MY RETURN FROM WASHDC. CASTRO

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

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