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| INFO | LOG-00 | ADS-00 | INR-07 | SS-00 | CLAE-00 | H-01 | NSCE-00 |
| | NSAE-00 | SSO-00 | HA-09 | L-03 | TRSE-00 | PM-10 | PA-01 |
| | OMB-01 | INRE-00 | USIE-00 | SP-02 | SNP-01 | C-01 | PRS-01 |
| | DS-01 | SCT-02 | P-02 | T-01 | /043 W | | |

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1268
SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILLIA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PN
USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA
USAFSO HOWARD AFB PN//DOI/LAI//

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 00980

CINCSO AND CINCLANT ALSO FOR INTAFF

E.O. 12356 DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL MARR, AR
SUBJ: LA TABLADA INVESTIGATIONS PROCEED AND
- POLEMICS CONTINUE

REF: (A) BUENOS AIRES 919 (B) BUENOS AIRES 920
- (C) BUENOS AIRES 917

1. (C) SUMMARY. INVESTIGATIONS INTO LA TABLADA WENT FORWARD OVER THE WEEKEND AND MORE SUSPECTED MTP MEMBERS WERE ROUNDED UP AND VARIOUS HOUSES RAIDED. NICARAGUA REMAINS SUSPECT AS A SUPPORTER OF THE TERRORIST, BUT
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THERE IS NO HARD EVIDENCE OF A DIRECT LINK TO THE ATTACK. THE GOA AND RADICAL PARTY HAVE HIT BACK AT MENEM'S CHARGES THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS USING LA TABLADA FOR POLITICAL ADVANTAGE. PERONISTS HAVE

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KEPT UP THEIR SIDE OF THE POLEMIC, BUT SOME IN THE PJ SEEM WORRIED THAT MENEM'S CHARGES WILL HURT HIM. THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL'S SECRETARY WILL BE RETIRED VICE ADMIRAL HUSSEY. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) INVESTIGATIONS BY THE FEDERAL COURT CONTINUED OVER THE WEEKEND WITH THE INTERROGATION UNDER STRICT SECURITY OF THOSE CAPTURED AT LA TABLADA. FEDERAL JUDGE GERARDO LAVRAMBERE HAS ORDERED THE ARREST OF ERP LEADER GORRIARAN MERLO FOR THE LA TABLADA ATTACK. THE COURT HAS ALSO ORDERED THE ARREST OF APPROXIMATELY 100 OTHER PERSONS AND, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, MORE THAN FIFTY HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO CUSTODY. THE AUTHORITIES HAVE UNCOVERED A HOUSE IN MORENO, A BUENOS AIRES SUBURB, USED BY THE TERRORISTS. POLICE REPORTEDLY FOUND AN UNDISCLOSED QUANTITY OF ARMS AND MUNITIONS.

3. (C) PUBLIC SPECULATION ABOUT FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT CONTINUES FOCUSING ON NICARAGUA AND GORRIARAN MERLO'S CONNECTIONS THERE. BUT ALL OF THE DEAD IDENTIFIED SO FAR AND THOSE UNDER ARREST ARE ARGENTINE NATIONALS. THIS TRACKS WITH WHAT OUR SOURCES TELL US. HOWEVER, A NUMBER OF THE HARD CORE TABLADA ATTACKERS SPENT TIME IN NICARAGUA AND HAVE STRONG LINKS TO THE SANDINISTAS (REF C).

4. (U) THE GOVERNMENT AND THE RADICAL PARTY HAVE
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REACTED STRONGLY TO MENEM'S CHARGE (REF A AND B) THAT THE ALFONSIN ADMINISTRATION INTENDED TO USE THE TABLADA INCIDENT TO DELAY PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, DENIGRATE THE PERONIST PARTY AND DENY HIM THE PRESIDENCY. INTERIOR MINISTER NOSIGLIA CALLED MENEM'S ACCUSATIONS A "BARBARITY" WHICH MADE NO SENSE. INTERIOR SECRETARY (VICE MINISTER) GIL LAVEDRA SAID THEY WERE PURE NONSENSE. SECRETARY OF JUSTICE CARLOS PAIZAO REQUESTED A JUDICIAL INVESTIGATION OF THE CHARGES AND DEMANDED PROOF FROM THE PERONIST CANDIDATE OF HIS SUSPICIONS THAT SECTORS IN THE RADICAL PARTY WERE SOMEHOW LINKED TO LA TABLADA EVENTS. UCR NATIONAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN EDISON OTERO, RADICAL VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE JUAN MANUEL CASELLA AND UCR CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES LEADER CESAR JAROSLAVSKY HAVE ALSO HIT BACK AT MENEM

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ACCUSING HIM OF BEING TRANSFORMED INTO A SPOKESMAN FOR THE ULTRA RIGHT, OF ENDANGERING LIBERTY THROUGH INTIMIDATION, AND OF MAKING POLITICAL THEATER.

5. (U) IN RADIO INTERVIEWS, MENEM REPEATED HIS CHARGES THAT THE GOA WOULD ATTEMPT TO DELAY THE ELECTIONS, BUT CLAIMED HE HAD NOT IMPLIED DIRECT LINKS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MTP IN THE LA TABLADA ATTACK. MENEM LOYALISTS ROUSSELOT, PIERRI AND CARDOZO HAMMERED AWAY AT THE GOVERNMENT'S SUPPOSED CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE PJ. THE PERONIST LEADER IN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES JOSE LUIS MANZANO CALLED FOR AN INVESTIGATION INTO CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE MTP AND THE INTERIOR MINISTRY AND SECRETARIAT FOR STATE INTELLIGENCE (SIDE).

6. (C) THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT COOLER HEADS IN PERONISM ARE WORRIED ABOUT WHAT MENEM'S LATEST STATE-

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TAGS: PREL MARR, AR
SUBJ: LA TABLADA INVESTIGATIONS PROCEED AND

MENTS ARE DOING TO THE CANDIDATE'S ELECTORAL CHANCES.
PJ PARTY PRESIDENT ANTONIO CAPIERO AND UCR PARTY
CHIEF OTERO ARE TO MEET THIS WEEK TO SEEK AN AGREEMENT
TO RAISE THE LEVEL OF THE CAMPAIGN AND TO REFRAIN
FROM PERSONAL ATTACKS AND MUD SLINGING.

7. (U) THE NEWLY-FORMED NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WILL HOLD ITS FIRST WORKING MEETING MONDAY, JANUARY 30.
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RETIRED VICE ADMIRAL BARRY MELBOURNE HUSSEY HAS BEEN
NAMED SECRETARY OF THE NSC. HUSSEY IS THE FORMER
VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE ARMED FORCES JOINT STAFF WHO
RETIRED IN DECEMBER 1988.

8. (C) COMMENT. MENEM HAS STEPPED BACK FROM THE
MOST SEVERE INTERPRETATION OF HIS CHARGES -- A DIRECT
LINK BETWEEN ELEMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MTP
ATTACK. HIS SUPPORTERS HAVE BEEN TRYING YET AGAIN
TO "CLARIFY" WHAT THE CANDIDATE SAID. WE BELIEVE
THERE IS A SENSE AMONG MORE MODERATE PERONIST
LEADERS LIKE CAPIERO THAT THESE PERSONAL ATTACKS AND
WILD CHARGES CAN ONLY DAMAGE MENEM IN THE LONG RUN BY
MAKING HIM LOOK IRRESPONSIBLE AND UNFIT TO GOVERN
THE COUNTRY. ADDITIONALLY, IF MENEM CONTINUES TO
CONCENTRATE HIS FIRE ON THE RADICALS AND FOCUS ATTEN-
TION ON DOMESTIC ELECTORAL CONSPIRACIES, HE COULD LOOK
VERY FOOLISH IF AND WHEN THE GOVERNMENT IS ABLE TO
PRODUCE EVIDENCE OF FOREIGN SUPPORT FOR THE LA TABLADA

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ATTACK.

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