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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 HA-05
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 L-03 PM-05 SP-02
SS-15 PRS-01 /053 W

O 161730Z NOV 77
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3236
INFO USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 8639

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, AR
SUBJECT: TIMERMAN WRITES EMBASSY OFFICER FROM JAIL

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S20000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
 Release () Excise () Deny
Exemption(s): _____
Declassify: () In Part In Full
() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to
Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

REF: BUENOS AIRES 8638

1. IN A HANDWRITTEN LETTER TO THE USIS PRESS OFFICER, EX-LA OPINION EDITOR JACOBO TIMERMAN PROPOSES THAT SECRETARY VANCE ASK PRESIDENT VIDELA TO LET HIM LEAVE THE COUNTRY ON THE SECRETARY'S PLANE. TIMERMAN SAYS THAT "CERTAINLY VIDELA COULDN'T REFUSE." THE LETTER WAS TAKEN (OR POSSIBLY SMUGGLED OUT) OF THE PRISON BY TIMERMAN'S SON HECTOR. THAT THE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED THIS LETTER SHOULD BE CAREFULLY PROTECTED INFORMATION.

2. COMPLETE TEXT FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: NOVEMBER 15, AS OF TODAY I'VE BEEN A PRISONER FOR SEVEN MONTHS.
QUERIDO MIKE:

THE AMERICANS HAVE DEMONSTRATED SUFFICIENT AUDACITY AND IMAGINATION TO EVALUATE THE FOLLOWING:

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IF MR. VANCE PROPOSES TO PRESIDENT VIDELA THAT HE LET ME LEAVE THE COUNTRY ON THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S PLANE, THAT IS TO SAY THAT I GO WITH MR. VANCE, CERTAINLY VIDELA COULDN'T REFUSE. IMAGINE IT, IT, IT MEANS AN IMPORTANT TRIUMPH FOR THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION THAT WILL HAVE WORLD WIDE REPERCUSSIONS.

BESIDES, NO SERIOUS PROBLEMS EXIST. I WAS DECLARED INNOCENT BY THE MILITARY TRIBUNAL. I AM NOT SUBJECT TO ANY TRIBUNAL-CIVIL OR MILITARY-NOR DO PENDING ACCUSATIONS EXIST. I WAS INCLUDED IN THE INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT, BUT IT IS TO ESTABLISH THE LEGITIMACY OF MY PROPERTY, IT DOESN'T MEAN PRISON. THERE ONLY REMAINS THE PEN DECREE WHICH COMES UNDER VIDELA AND IT CAN BE SIGNED IN A FEW MINUTES. I BELIEVE THE MATTER IS NOT DIFFICULT. THANKS FOR EVERYTHING. UN ABRAZO, TIMERMAN. END QUOTE.

3. COMMENT: THE LETTER CLEARLY DEMONSTRATES THAT TIMERMAN HAS NOT LOST HIS SHARP MIND DURING HIS DETENTION. DESPITE HIS OPTIMISM, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE EASY, FEASIBLE OR EVEN POSSIBLE FOR PRESIDENT VIDELA TO AGREE TO RELEASE HIM. SUCH ACTION ON THE PART OF AN ARGENTINE PRESIDENT WOULD BE CONSIDERED AN IGNOMIOUS CAVING-IN TO THE AMERICANS, AND IT WOULD BE HIGHLY DANGEROUS POLITICALLY. IN ADDITION, TIMERMAN'S INTERPRETATION OF HIS STATUS UNDER THE ACT COULD BE WRONG.
CASTRO

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