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TEXT
TAGS: PHUM, PGOV, PTER, SOCI, AR
SUBJECT: ANTI-SEMITISM ON THE RISE AGAIN IN ARGENTINA?

REFS: (A) BUENOS AIRES 11494
- (B) BUENOS AIRES 11556

1. (C-ENTIRE TEXT)
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2. SUMMARY. ANTI-SEMITIC REMARKS DURING A PUBLIC MASS, RECENT DISCOVERY OF REMAINS OF JEWISH KIDNAP VICTIMS FROM THE EARLY 1980S, REACTIONS TO THE ARREST OF A SUSPECTED NAZI WAR CRIMINAL, AND NOVEMBER 14 SYNAGOGUE BOMBING HAVE CONVINCED LOCAL JEWISH LEADERS THAT ANTI-SEMITISM IS ONCE AGAIN ON THE RISE IN ARGENTINA. THE DAIA UMBRELLA JEWISH ORGANIZATION ATTRIBUTES THE UPSURGE TO TRADITIONAL TENDENCY TO USE ARGENTINE JEWS AS SCAPEGOATS IN TIMES OF MALAISE AND DISCONTENT WITH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP DRIFT. WE DO NOT SEE ANTI-SEMITISM AT CRISIS PROPORTIONS IN ARGENTINA, BUT HIGH-VISIBILITY INCIDENTS MAY INCREASE. END SUMMARY.
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3. A SERIES OF HIGH-VISIBILITY INCIDENTS HAVE

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CONVINCED LEADERS OF ARGENTINA'S 300,000-STRONG JEWISH COMMUNITY THAT ANTI-SEMITISM IS ON THE RISE AGAIN. DAIA (NATIONAL JEWISH UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION) EXECUTIVE SECRETARY BARBARAS TOLD POLOFF NOVEMBER 16 THAT ANTI-SEMITIC CLIMATE IN ARGENTINA IS NOW WORSE THAN IT HAS BEEN AT ANY TIME SINCE RETURN OF DEMOCRACY IN 1983. HE POINTED TO THE FOLLOWING:

4. FAMUS MASS.

FAMUS ("FAMILIES OF VICTIMS OF SUBVERSION") IS CONSERVATIVE, QUASI-HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION THAT HOLDS A PUBLIC MASS EVERY MONTH IN MEMORY OF THE MOSTLY-MILITARY VICTIMS OF TERRORIST ATTACKS DURING THE 1970S. THE SEPTEMBER MASS WAS HELD IN THE CITY OF CORODBA. A MILITARY CHAPLAIN (BELTRAN) OFFICIATED. IN THE COURSE OF HIS HOMILY, FATHER BELTRAN WARNED THE PARISHIONERS TO BEWARE OF THE "LEFTIST AND JEWISH INFLUENCE" IN THE CURRENT ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT. DAIA CONDEMNED BELTRAN'S HOMILY AND DEMANDED A PUBLIC REPUDIATION BY THE ARGENTINE CHURCH. AFTER NEARLY TWO WEEKS, THE ARCHBISHOP OF CORDOBA ISSUED A CAREFUL STATEMENT DISTANCING THE CHURCH FROM FATHER BELTRAN'S HOMILY. THE DAIA LEADERSHIP EXPRESSED ITSELF SATISFIED WITH CARDINAL PRIMATESTA'S STATEMENT, BUT CONCERNED AT THE LONG TIME ELAPSED BETWEEN FATHER BELTRAN'S HOMILY AND REPUDIATION.

5. SIVAK-NEUMANN KIDNAP CASES.

LOCAL PRESS HAS GIVEN PREEMINENT COVERAGE TO THE ARRESTS OF MEMBERS OF A GANG THAT KIDNAPPED, RANSOMED, AND MURDERED WEALTHY ARGENTINE BUSINESSMEN SIVAK AND NEUMANN IN THE EARLY 1980S (REFTELS). BOTH SIVAK AND NEUMANN WERE JEWISH. PUBLIC EVIDENCE SUGGESTS PRIME MOTIVATION OF THE KIDNAPPINGS WAS FINANCIAL, BUT ALL SUSPECTS ARRESTED TO DATE AND OTHERS ALLEGED BY PROSECUTORS WERE MEMBERS OF FEDERAL POLICE OR MILITARY INTELLIGENCE UNITS. DAIA HAS PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED THAT IT IS CONDUCTING ITS OWN INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE KIDNAPPINGS AND SUBSEQUENT LAPSES AND DELAYS IN THE OFFICIAL INVESTIGATIONS WERE DRIVEN BY ANTI-SEMITISM. BARBARAS REPORTED DAIA IS WATCHING WITH CONCERN TO LEARN WHETHER ADDITIONAL VICTIMS OF THIS KIDNAPPING RING ARE JEWISH AS WELL.

6. NAZI WAR CRIMINAL ARREST IN CORDOBA.

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SUSPECTED **NAZI** WAR CRIMINAL JOSEF FRANZ LEO
C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 11749

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SCHWANNBERGER WAS ARRESTED IN CORDOBA PROVINCE NOVEMBER 13 AND IS BEING HELD FOR POSSIBLE EXTRADITION TO THE FRG. A GERMAN WARRANT WAS ISSUED FOR HIS ARREST IN 1973 AND **NAZI**-HUNTER SIMON WIESENTHAL TOLD THE PRESS HE BELIEVES SCHWANNBERGER HAS LIVED IN **ARGENTINA** SINCE 1950. THE DAIA IS PLEASED WITH THE ARREST AND POSSIBLE EXTRADITION. THE JEWISH ORGANIZATION IS CONCERNED AT THE DELAY, HOWEVER; THEY BELIEVE THAT WITH EVEN MINIMAL EFFORT, THE SUSPECT COULD HAVE BEEN LOCATED AND DETAINED ANY TIME OVER THE LAST 30 YEARS. IN ADDITION, ACCORDING TO BARBARAS, SINCE THE NOVEMBER 13 ARREST, ANTI-SEMITIC GRAFFITTI IN CORDOBA AND TELEPHONE THREATS/INSULTS AGAINST THE JEWISH COMMUNITY HAVE INCREASED NOTICEABLY.

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7. SYNAGOGUE BOMBING.

A POWERFUL BOMB EXPLODED IN A BUENOS AIRES SYNAGOGUE NOVEMBER 14, CAUSING NO INJURIES BUT SERIOUS DAMAGE. NO GROUP HAS CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR BOMBING THE 60-YEAR-OLD SYNAGOGUE. EMBASSY AND DAIA RECORDS INDICATE THIS WAS THE FIRST TERRORIST BOMBING OF A SYNAGOGUE SINCE 1983.

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8. DAIA ASSESSMENT.

BESIDES THE FOUR SPECIFIC EVENTS OUTLINED ABOVE, DAIA REPORTS A GENERAL UPSURGE IN ANTI-SEMITIC THREATS AND GRAFFITTI OVER THE PAST TWO MONTHS. EXCEPT FOR THE RECENT ARREST OF SCHWANNBERGER, THEY DO NOT SEE ANY SPECIFIC INCIDENT THAT MIGHT HAVE PROVOKED THE UPSURGE IN ANTI-SEMITISM. DAIA'S BARBARAS SPECULATED THAT GENERAL MALAISE AND DISCONTENT WITH ARGENTINA'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DRIFT PRODUCED THE TRADITIONAL RISE OF THOSE WHO BLAME THE JEWS FOR THE COUNTRY'S ILLS.

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9. COMMENT. WHILE THERE IS CERTAINLY AN UPSURGE OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN ARGENTINA, IT IS NOT A CRISIS. THE FAMUS HOMILY WAS EVENTUALLY REPUDIATED BY THE CHURCH, THE SIVAK AND NEUMANN KIDNAPPINGS OCCURRED YEARS AGO, AND THE SCHWANNBERGER ARREST--

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ALTHOUGH LONG DELAYED--WAS WARMLY APPLAUDED BY THE JEWISH COMMUNITY. NEVERTHELESS, A STREAK OF ANTI-SEMITISM LURKS NEAR THE SURFACE IN ARGENTINA, AND A FEW HIGH-PROFILE INCIDENTS COULD CONCEIVABLY INSPIRE OTHERS. WE CAN PROBABLY ASSUME THAT DAIA HAS PASSED DANGER MESSAGES TO FELLOW JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES AND ELSEWHERE. WE MAY HEAR THEM REPEATED FROM THOSE QUARTERS IN THE WEEKS AHEAD.

GILDRED#

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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