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C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 000013

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TEXT

TAGS: UN, UNSC, MARR, PKO, HK, AR, SR
SUBJECT: EASTERN SLAVONIA: PERCEPTION OF ARGENTINA
- AMONG SERBS

REF: 95 STATE 293700

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY STEVEN L. BLAKE, POLITICAL/

NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
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ECONOMIC COUNSELOR. REASON: 1.5(D).

2. (C) **ARGENTINA** SUFFERS FROM A PERCEPTION AMONG SERBS THAT IT OFFERED REFUGE TO NUMBERS OF CROATS AFTER WORLD WAR II WHO HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN THE PRO-**NAZI** USTASHI REGIME. WHEN UN TROOPS WERE INITIALLY DEPLOYED TO THE UN PROTECTED AREAS IN CROATIA, THE SERBIAN NATIONALIST PRESS SOUGHT TO PROTRAY THE ARGENTINE SOLDIERS AS PRO-USTASHI, AS SERBIAN PROPAGANDA THEN LABELLED THE ZAGREB GOVERNMENT.

2. (C) DESPITE THAT EARLIER ATTEMPT TO LINK THE ARGENTINES AND THE CROATS, WE DO NOT RECALL THAT ARGENTINE FORCES WERE AT ALL MENTIONED IN THE SERBIAN PRESS AT THE TIME OF THE CROATIAN ATTACK ON SECTORS NORTH AND SOUTH LAST AUGUST, MUCH LESS OF FAILING TO IMPEDE CROATIAN MILITARY OPERATIONS. UNCRO FORCES IN GENERAL WERE PRESENTED HERE AS ALMOST "VICTIMS" ALONG WITH THE KRAJINA SERBS DURING AND AFTER THE SUCCESSFUL CROATIAN OFFENSIVE. HAD THE ARGENTINES DONE ANYTHING THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN CONSTRUED AS HELPFUL TO THE CROATIAN ATTACK AGAINST THE KRAJINA SERBS, IT WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN THE LOCAL PRESS.

3. (C) GIVEN THE WHOLEHEARTEDLY PRO-PEACE LINE OF THE STATE-RUN SERBIAN PRESS AFTER DAYTON, WE THINK IT UNLIKELY THAT BELGRADE WOULD WISH TO SINGLE OUT ARGENTINE TROOPS AS BIASED TOWARDS ZAGREB SHOULD THEY PARTICIPATE IN UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN EASTERN SLAVONIA. THAT SAID, MEMORIES ARE LONG WHEN IT COMES TO COUNTRIES THAT, FOR WHATEVER REASON, THE AVERAGE SERB CONSIDERS TO BE ANTI-SERB (SAME AS BEING PRO-CROAT). WHILE WE DEFER TO EMBASSY ZAGREB TO ASSESS THE ATTITUDES OF THE SERBIAN POPULATION IN EASTERN SLAVONIA, WE BELIEVE THAT BELGRADE WOULD SEEK TO DAMPEN ANY LINGERING HOSTILITY TO ARGENTINE TROOPS FELT BY SERBS THERE.

4. (U) SARAJEVO MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. BUTLER

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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