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SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: NAZI GOLD AND NAZI HUNTERS

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(B) BUENOS AIRES 1811
(C) STATE 101969

NAZI GOLD

1. ON JUNE 5 WE MET WITH THE MFA'S DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS, MINISTER JOSE GUTIERREZ MAXWELL, AND HIS DEPUTY, COUNSELOR RODOLFO BLACHOWISZ, WHO HAVE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY IN THE MINISTRY FOR THE NAZI GOLD ISSUE. WE GAVE THEM A COPY OF THE RECENTLY ISSUED "NEUTRALS REPORT" AND THE WEBSITE ADDRESS FOR OBTAINING MORE COPIES IF NEEDED.

2. GUTIERREZ THANKED US WARMLY FOR THE REPORT AND SAID HE WOULD MAKE IT AVAILABLE TO THE MEMBERS OF ARGENTINA'S NAZI GOLD COMMISSION. HE SAID THAT THE MINISTRY WAS DRAFTING A PRESS RELEASE ABOUT THE REPORT AND THAT HE WOULD FAX IT TO US AS SOON AS IT WAS AVAILABLE (AT WHICH POINT WE WILL FORWARD IT

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TO THE DEPARTMENT). PRESS COVERAGE OF THE REPORT HAS SO FAR BEEN LOW-KEY, WITH ARTICLES APPEARING IN THE BACK PAGES OF THREE DAILIES (CLARIN, PAGINA/12, AND AMBITO FINANCIERO) ON JUNE 3 (COPIES FAXED TO ARA/BSC). WE HAVE RECEIVED NO PRESS INQUIRIES ABOUT THE REPORT.

3. GUTIERREZ GAVE US A COPY OF THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE VERSION OF THE FIRST REPORT OF THE GOA'S "COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO NAZI ACTIVITIES IN ARGENTINA" (CEANA). THE UNPAGED REPORT CONTAINS BRIEF PRESENTATIONS BY TEN RESEARCH UNITS IN ARGENTINA AND ABROAD. IT IS AVAILABLE AT THE CEANA WEBSITE (HTTP://WWW.CEANA.ORG.AR). GUTIERREZ SAID A SECOND REPORT IS DUE OUT IN JULY, AND HE EXPECTED A THIRD WOULD BE ISSUED AS WELL AT SOME STILL LATER DATE.

4. REGARDING THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE ORGANIZING SEMINAR JUNE 29-30 (REF A), GUTIERREZ EXPECTED THE GOA WOULD SEND A MEMBER OF THE ACADEMIC COMMITTEE OF CEANA AND AN MFA REPRESENTATIVE, EITHER FROM THE MINISTRY OR THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. A DECISION WILL BE MADE THE WEEK OF JUNE 8.

NAZI HUNTERS

5. A NEW MEMBER OF CEANA IS THE INTERIOR MINISTRY'S NATIONAL INSTITUTE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA, AND RACISM (INADI). INADI CAME TO PROMINENCE IN APRIL BY CALLING FOR THE ARREST OF ALLEGED WAR CRIMINAL DINKO SAKIC AS SOON AS THE NEWS BROKE THAT HE WAS LIVING IN ARGENTINA (REF B). IN MAY INADI CREATED AN "OFFICE OF ANALYSIS ON THE EXISTENCE OF WAR CRIMINALS AND NEO-NAZI GROUPS IN ARGENTINA," WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE INTERIOR MINISTRY'S SECRETARIAT FOR INTERNAL SECURITY. GUTIERREZ SAID IT WAS THE CREATION OF THIS OFFICE THAT LED TO THE INVITATION TO INADI TO JOIN CEANA. HE SAID THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS WERE COMPLEMENTARY, WITH CEANA CONDUCTING RESEARCH AND INADI GOING INTO COURT IF THIS RESEARCH REVEALED ONGOING NAZI ACTIVITIES IN ARGENTINA.

6. ON MAY 8 WE MET WITH INADI DIRECTOR VICTOR RAMOS AND HIS DEPUTY, ROBERTO BRALLARD. RAMOS SAID INADI WAS CREATED IN 1995, AT THE TIME OF THE PRIEBKE EXTRADITION, IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST TO PRESIDENT MENEM FROM RUBEN BERAJA, PRESIDENT OF THE DAIA, AN UMBRELLA GROUP OF JEWISH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS. THE INSTITUTE DID NOT GET UP AND RUNNING, HOWEVER, UNTIL LATE LAST YEAR. IT HAS A STAFF OF 25 AND 200 VOLUNTEERS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, BUT AN ANNUAL BUDGET OF ONLY 700,000 PESOS/DOLLARS. IT HAS A TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR RECEIVING COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION AND HAS RECEIVED 1,600 CALLS IN SIX MONTHS. INADI AND A HUMAN RIGHTS NGO ARE SUING THE PARENTS OF THREE "SKINHEADS" CONVICTED IN APRIL OF A 1995 ANTI-SEMITIC ATTACK ON A YOUTH IN BUENOS AIRES. THE SUIT ACCUSES THE PARENTS OF ANTI-SEMITIC OUTBURSTS DURING THE TRIAL. RAMOS SAID HE IS ALSO TRYING TO GET THE ISSUE OF NEO-NAZISM ON THE AGENDA OF MERCOSUR.

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7. RAMOS SHOWED US A COPY OF AN APRIL 14 LETTER TO SECRETARY ALBRIGHT THANKING HER FOR COMMENTS BY THE DEPARTMENT'S PRESS SPOKESMAN PRAISING THE GOA'S ACTIONS IN THE SAKIC CASE AND REQUESTING A MEETING WITH HER TO DISCUSS "THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION" (A REFERENCE, WE PRESUME, TO THE PROPOSED UN CONFERENCE). WE WILL TRY TO SET UP A MEETING BETWEEN RAMOS AND E SENIOR ADVISER BENNETT FREEMAN DURING THE LATTER'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO BUENOS AIRES (REF C).

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ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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