KECORSS

This profile is based on information available as of 18 December 2003 and does not reflect developments since that time.

Jorge Luis BATLLE Ibanez

(Phonetic: BAH-zhay)

President (since 2000)

(b)(3)

Addressed as: Mr. President

Lawyer and lifelong Colorado Party (PC) politician Jorge Batlle is struggling to improve Uruguay's troubled economy and to carve out a role for his small country in international affairs. He assiduously seeks closer relations with the United States with the overlapping aims of reducing Uruguay's vulnerability to economic gyrations in neighboring Argentina and Brazil, gaining greater market access for Uruguayan products, and boosting his own political prestige, which has declined precipitously largely as a result of the country's worst economic performance in a century. Public opinion polls indicate that a majority of Uruguayans has lost confidence in his ability to manage the

economy

despite his

difficulties, Batlle remains committed to seeing his market-friendly policies through. Batlle has publicly recognized President Bush's role in "rescuing" Uruguay by providing a bridge loan and support in international financial institutions for emergency

financing in 2002 (b)(3)

(b)(1)(b)(3)

Under the Gun at Home

(b)(3)

Despite Batlle's desire for a larger international role and his willingness to tackle the economy's inefficiencies, entrenched political resistance to reforming Uruguay's popular social welfare system has stymied his efforts. After some early successes in pushing legislation through Congress, Batlle's efforts to privatize key state-owned enterprises have stalled in the face of opposition from across the political spectrum.

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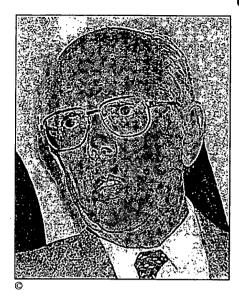
His failure to consult with his former coalition partner, the

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URUGUAY



Proud of Role as "Cowboy Number Two"

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Batlle strongly supports the US antiterrorist position. He effusively praised President Bush's 2001 speech to the UN General Assembly session on counterterrorism, and dubbed himself "Cowboy Number Two" to President Bush's "Cowboy Number One" to demonstrate his support. Batlle has increased his country's manpower contributions to international peacekeeping operations with the stated aim of freeing US soldiers from nonterrorism-related duties; in fact, Uruguay is the largest contributor

National Party, contributed to the party's withdrawal of its ministers from the cabinet in late 2002, (b)(3)

of all of the Americas to UN security operations.

(b)(3)

(b)(1)

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(continued) LP 03-107048 18 December 2003

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