

RELEASE IN FULL



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Argentina

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Mr. Allen Harris  
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Buenos Aires, Argentina

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S10070044)  
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS  
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director  
( ) Release (X) Excise ( ) Deny  
Exemption(s): B6  
Declassify: ( ) In Part (X) In Full  
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(2, 3, 4)

Dear Tex:

Welcome back from vacation! While you were gone you missed the visit of Herb Semmel from the Center for Law and Social Policy and Admiral Sanguinetti from the French-based International League for Human Rights. I had a chance to talk with both of them upon their return to the United States and thought I would pass on what they said for your information and in case any of it is news (some of it was to me).

Sanguinetti did most of the talking. He passed on the following information from a meeting with Harguindeguy. According to the Minister 43 additional people will be granted the right of option on February 15. 3,472 is the number of people under PEN (slightly lower than that published in the press). Of these six are religious, 144 are foreigners. 1,899 have been held since the days of Isabel Peron, leaving 1,583 as detained after the coup. Harguindeguy says Isabel released 729 such detainees in her day while the military have released 2,361. Evidently Harguindeguy agreed to give a dossier containing this and, perhaps, additional information to a third member of the Semmel Group, John Carroll, a Supreme Court Justice from New York. I'll pass it on if Carroll has it.

Harguindeguy said that two people are under house arrest and 46 are allowed freedom under surveillance with a check-in to the police station required every two weeks. Harguindeguy claims all detainees are in official prisons with a few exceptions, i.e. six or eight. He admitted that detainees may be kept for four to six days at military installations during

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their initial interrogation. In response to a question by the Group, Harguindeguy said that no lawyers are in prison for having defended terrorists, rather they are held for being "more deeply involved" with terrorists. He responded to the question of why the State of Seige has not been lifted when it is recognized that armed terrorism is under control, by saying that if the State of Seige were lifted all the detainees would have to be released and he did not want this to happen. *The Government*

Harguindeguy told the Group that by February 15, the GOA will begin to publish the names of the detained. Semmel stressed that it is necessary for the USG to make public its concern over those held at military installations and outside the regular prisons in detention centers so that the GOA will be under some pressure to include their names as well in any lists published. Perhaps, the presence of the ICRC could be used somehow to prod the GOA to be more accountable on this score. That is unless, of course, one wishes to accept Harguindeguy's account that only six to eight are held outside of the regular prisons in contrast to other reports that from 2,000 to 2,500 may be held in Campo de Mayo alone.

Admiral Sanguinetti was shocked by Massera, with whom the Group also met. He said he denied responsibility for any detentions and constantly smiled while the most terrible things were being discussed.

With regard to the right of option, Semmel stressed that we could expect the GOA to provide biased dossiers on those requesting exile -- i.e. indicating they are terrorists in an effort to discourage governments from receiving them. I told Semmel that the Embassy would not take such briefs at their face value, but you may wish to keep this in the back of your mind. Further on the right of option, Semmel recounted a conversation with Ambassador Castro which indicates that the Ambassador did not understand our willingness and ability to accept those opting to come to the U.S. In referring to a remark made by Foreign Minister Montes to the Group that neither U.S. nor France would accept refugees, Castro said there was an element of truth in this and said we had no refugee program and that such a program

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use to you. We all appreciate very much the excellent work you've been doing. I'm sorry Herb Semmel didn't have a chance to meet you as I think he would have come away with a different opinion of the Embassy.

Yours truly,



Michele M. Bova  
Human Rights Officer

P.S.

On November 22 we cabled the name of a young women who has disappeared, Teresa Lajmanovich, (State 279351). Since then the Embassy submitted her name to the Foreign Ministry Working Group (BA 8872). However, according to the girls sister Ana who lives here, her parents have gone to the Embassy to ask if the name was submitted and have been told it has not. Could you help relieve their anxiety by telephoning them or dropping them a line to assure them that we've made the inquiry? Their address is: Mr. and Mrs. Simon Lajmanovich, Belisario Roldan 57, Acussuso, B.A. Province, Telephone 792-5686. D/A

cc:  
ARA/ECA:F. Rondon

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