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EO 12065: GDS 7/7/88 (KEANE, JOHN F.) OR-P
TAGS: PINT, PBOR, SHUM, AR, US
SUBJECT: GOA SUSPENDS COLLABORATION WITH USG ON HUMAN RIGHTS

REF: BUENOS AIRES 3499

1. [REDACTED] ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY. THE GOA HAS NOTIFIED US THAT ITS COOPERATION WITH THE USG ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES HAS BEEN SUSPENDED UNTIL THE SITUATION OF OUR OVERALL RELATIONS "CLARIFIES". WE SUSPECT THIS IS A PRESSURE TACTIC TO OBTAIN LIFTING OF US SANCTIONS IMPOSED IN CONNECTION WITH FALKLANDS WAR. END SUMMARY.

3. ON JULY 1, EMBOFF CALLED ON FONMIN OFFICER-IN-CHARGE OF HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES, COUNSELOR MARCELO COLOMBO MURUA, TO DISCUSS RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF PEN PRISONER RELEASES (REFTEL), REQUEST A LIST OF THOSE FREED AND PRESENT A CONGRESSIONAL LETTER REQUESTING INFORMATION ON THE WHEREABOUTS OF A DISAPPEARED PERSON. COLOMBO MURUA RESPONDED THAT HE WOULD PREPARE A LIST OF THE PERSONS RECENTLY RELEASED AND REQUESTED THAT WE SEND A DIPLOMATIC NOTE FORWARDING THE CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY.

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4. (FYI: THIS HAS BEEN STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER IN

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THE FONMIN AND THE COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE ON HUMAN RIGHTS DISPLAYED BY THE GOA SINCE THE INCEPTION OF THE VIOLA ADMINISTRATION IN MARCH 1981. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND INTERIOR MINISTRY HAVE REGULARLY RESPONDED TO OUR INQUIRIES ON BEHALF OF CONGRESSMEN AND US HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS. INDEED, A NUMBER OF RELEASES OF PEN DETAINEES ARE DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO US REPRESENTATIONS. IN SHORT, THE GOA HAS BEEN COOPERATIVE, AND THIS REFLECTED IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. END FYI)

5. ON JULY 2, COLOMBO MURUA CALLED TELLING US TO SUSPEND PREPARATION OF THE DIPLOMATIC NOTE AND ASKED EMBOFF TO COME IN THE FOLLOWING WEEK SO THAT HE COULD PROVIDE AN EXPLANATION. ON JULY 7, COLOMBO MURUA TOLD EMBOFF THAT GOA OFFICIALS HAVE DECIDED TO "SUSPEND COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES UNTIL THE SITUATION OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS CLARIFIES." GOA WILL NO LONGER ACCEPT INQUIRIES OR REPRESENTATIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS CASES OR PROVIDE INFORMATION OF ANY KIND ON HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS TO THE USG. COLOMBO MURUA SAID THAT THIS DOES NOT IMPLY ANY CHANGE IN GOA POLICIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS; RATHER, IT IS SIMPLY A DECISION TO NOT COOPERATE WITH THE USG. COLOMBO MURUA SAID HE LAMENTED THIS DECISION AND HOPED THAT EVENTS WILL RESULT IN AN EARLY RETURN TO COOPERATIVE RELATIONS IN THIS IMPORTANT AREA. IN THE MEANTIME, HE SAID THAT IF THERE IS AN IMPORTANT AND URGENT MATTER ABOUT WHICH WE NEEDED TO CONSULT, AND IF IT CAN BE TREATED IN AN UNOFFICIAL MANNER, HE WOULD DO WHAT HE COULD WITHIN THE LIMITATIONS THE GOA DECISION

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PLACES ON HIM.

6. COMMENT: AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THE GOA WANTS A THAW IN OUR RELATIONS, BUT THEY EXPECT US TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE. THE KEY ISSUE NOW IS LIFTING OF SANCTIONS, AS ALLUDED TO IN PRESIDENT BIGNONE'S REPLY TO PRESIDENT REAGAN'S MESSAGE. WE SUSPECT THE DECISION TO WITHHOLD COOPERATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS IS AN ATTEMPT TO PRESSURE US IN THAT DIRECTION.
SHLAUDEMAN

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