

F.A.S. PUBLIC INTEREST REPORT

Journal of the Federation of American Scientists (FAS)

THE ARGENTINE RETURN
TO DEMOCRACY

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IN HELPING ARGENTINA WE HELP OURSELVES

The election in Argentina has produced a Government that is as different from the previous military rule as day is from night. Where the military were stupid, fascist, and cruel, the Alfonsin Government is adept, liberal, and humane.

U.S. interest in helping this Government goes well beyond our interest in supporting freedom and human rights in Argentina. If this Government fails, there will surely be a default on Argentine bank loans—in this default our own banks and even our economy itself are at risk. One bank failure triggered the recession; the failure of a country that owes \$44 billion to 300 American banks is much worse.

There is, also, the Argentine nuclear program with its capacity to produce nuclear bombs if the Argentines give the word. Just as one military government sought to prolong its life with a popular foreign adventure in war in the Falklands/Malvinas, so also might a future Argentine Government seek refuge in the enormous popularity, in Argentina, of all things nuclear and call for a bomb. Then we would have default for sure; no one is going to invest in a part of the world so prone to military coups when the investment is likely to go up in nuclear smoke. And we might have, in time, regional nuclear war.

So it is not only the world human rights movement which must help Argentina consolidate its advances in human rights. The economic community must help Argentina avoid a default that is dangerous to ourselves. And the community of arms controllers must do all it can to help prevent the Argentina nuclear program from blossoming out into bombs, whether in a peaceful guise or in any other. Most important, the democratization of Argentina and its control of its army can have infectious effects throughout Latin America.

The interviews described within show a rising awareness of these dangers even in such involved quarters as the nuclear chief Admiral Carlos Castro Madero. Like the atomic scientists who founded FAS, and who bear a heavy responsibility—which they are seeking to fulfill—for the arms race, Admiral Madero and others in the Argentine nuclear program, must work to halt the movement toward a nuclearized Latin America.

Whether Argentina will now ratify the Treaty of Tlatoloco is not yet clear; but it seems unlikely to ratify it in a way that prevents peaceful nuclear explosives. Perhaps only an internal effort from Argentina, and by Argentines, can capture enough political support within the cone of Brazil, Chile, and Argentina to do that.

In any case, something must be done to prevent the glacial drift toward bombs in Argentina and Brazil, even as we must stop the even more dangerous drift, here and in the Soviet Union, toward world-wide nuclear catastrophe. FAS pledges its readiness to help those Latin Americans who want to take the lead in a problem which only they can solve.

FAS VISIT TO ARGENTINA

Stimulated by the return of Argentina to civilian rule, FAS decided to investigate what this change might mean for nuclear non-proliferation and human rights. Director Jeremy J. Stone spent the period of March 4 to March 9 in that country, accompanied by Colonel Edward L. King (U.S. Army, Ret.), who functioned as guide, interpreter, and adviser.

Colonel King, the only senior officer to have resigned his commission over the Vietnamese war, was, until his resignation, the Army's most experienced officer in Latin American military affairs. Through his position on the Inter-American Defense Board, and through his fluent Spanish, he has come to know not only the military situations and politics throughout Latin America but even many of the leading personalities, so often military or linked to them.

The Federation's success in seeing, among others, two key advisers to President Alfonsin, on non-proliferation and on military affairs, was due to him. The Federation is grateful to the Ploughshares Foundation for the timely travel grant, issued on short notice, that made it possible for Col. King to accompany Stone to Argentina. FAS's expenses in this project were underwritten by the W. Alton Jones Foundation. The text of this report, and the photographs, are due to Stone.



The Naval Mechanics School, where many of the kidnapped and arrested were imprisoned and tortured.

**INTERVIEWS: NUCLEAR CHIEF-4, 5; DEFENSE MINISTRY-8, 9; SENIOR BANKER-11
ALSO, p-12—WILL FRENCH SUPERPHENIX VIOLATE U.S. AGREEMENT?**

ARGENTINA IS AN ENIGMA

Argentina has always been hard for North Americans to understand. Even specialists have found puzzling its continuing state of crisis.

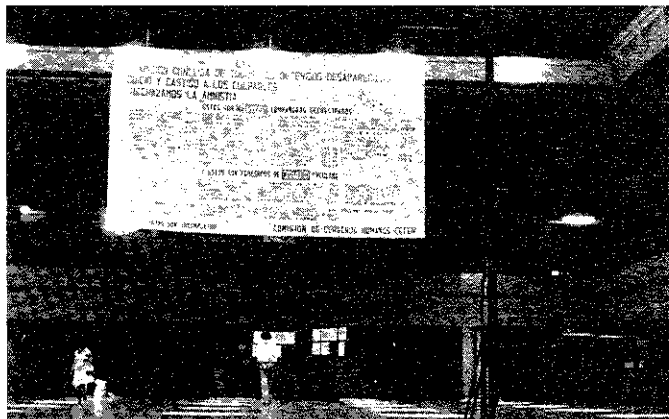
James R. Scobie, in "Argentina," observes:

"This endemic condition [of crisis] first became evident in the late 1920's and has contributed to economic inertia, political instability, and moral malaise ever since. The drift of recent decades puzzles statesmen, politicians, social scientists, and humanists. No facile analysis or ready diagnosis seems to suggest the causes or cures. Economic, political, sociological, and even psychological explanations for Argentina's anemia leave much unanswered."

At one time, before World War I Argentina was the rival of the United States as a promised land. But in the last 40-some years, the situation has deteriorated badly. In that time, there were only two periods, comprising about seven years, of democratic rule. By contrast, eight different generals ruled in this era and coups were frequent.

By the seventies, internal strife was rampant. In "Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number," Jacobo Timerman writes of the number of factions that existed:

"Between 1973 and 1976 there were four Peronist presidents, including Juan Domingo Peron and his wife Isabel. The violence enveloping the country erupted on all fronts, completing a development that had begun in 1964 with the appearance of the first guerrillas, trained in Cuba by one of Che Guevara's aides-de-camp. Coexisting in Argentina were: rural and urban Trotskyite guerrillas; right-wing Peronist death squads; armed terrorist groups of the large labor unions, used for handling union matters; paramilitary army groups, dedicated to avenging the murder of their men; parapolice groups of both the Left and the Right vying for supremacy within the organization of federal and provincial police forces; and terrorist groups of Catholic rightists, organized by cabals who opposed Pope John XXII's proposals to reconcile the liberal leftist Catholic priests, seeking to apply—generally with anarchistic zeal—the ideological thesis of rapprochement be-



University of Buenos Aires: An enormous poster hanging in the auditorium of the Faculty for Exact Sciences calls for the return to life of the disappeared and punishment for those responsible, and lists 29 members of the faculty (or about 10% of it!) and 46 others associated with the School with dates of their disappearance.

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tween the Church and the poor. These, of course, were only the principal groups of organized or systematized violence. Hundreds of other organizations involved in the eroticism of violence existed, small units that found ideological justification for armed struggle in a poem by Neruda or an essay by Marcuse. Lefebvre might be as useful as Heidegger; a few lines by Mao Zedong might trigger off the assassination of a businessman in a Buenos Aires suburb; and a hazy interpretation of Mircea Eliade might be perfect for kidnapping an industrialist to obtain a ransom that would make possible a further perusal of Indian philosophy and mysticism to corroborate the importance of national liberation."

At this point the Army stepped in with careful preparations for a final solution to the problem of terrorism achieved in secrecy that would prevent outcries from world or domestic Argentine opinion. Already, the National Commission for the Disappeared has received testimony that more than 30 different small prisons and concentration camps were constructed in secret where opponents could be interrogated through torture and then, in most cases, killed and secretly disposed of. The day we arrived still another mass grave of victims was discovered which was thought to contain as many as 1,000 victims.

According to Timerman, at least 10,000 perished and 15,000 disappeared. In a country of 30,000,000—one eighth of our size—this is like a loss of 200,000 lives or 50% of all the losses of the U.S. in World Wars I and II and the Korean and Vietnamese wars combined.

Throughout the seventies, the economic situation deteriorated as well, with higher and higher rates of inflation. Argentina already has the highest per capita indebtedness in the world, with \$1500 per person owed abroad.

In 1982, seeking in part to distract attention from these problems, the Junta turned to a foreign adventure to distract attention: it tried to occupy the Falklands/Malvinas. This was its undoing.

In fact, Prime Minister Thatcher is the liberator of Argentina. Her defeat of the Argentine military demoralized and shamed the proud Argentine military to the point where they decided to turn matters back to civilian rule. Thus the surprising denouement to the military's "dirty war" at home was a wildly popular war to liberate offshore islands which, when it failed, pricked the balloon of popular support with a bang.

Our visit to Argentina came during the third month after the surprising election of President Raul Alfonsin. A very popular and shrewd politician, he was moving on a variety of fronts to set things straight.

HUMAN RIGHTS

An autonomous commission of distinguished persons had been set up ("National Commission for the Disappeared") to compile the facts for the Government. But the military had been assigned the task of trying their own for the crimes they may have committed.

Human rights activists complained to us that "If a priest kills a man, we do not let the Church try him." As fathers of the disappeared, they protested what they feared would

(Continued on page 6)



A lawyer for the National Commission for the Disappeared, Susana Aquad, describes its work.

VIEWS OF AN ARGENTINE SCIENTIST

An Argentine scientist in his 40's, who had left the University, the better to support his large family in industry, gave us this summary of the Argentine situation:

Argentineans are very disunited in their opinions, but the country is being united by:

1) fear of terrorism, whose repression had been approved by their silence;

2) economic recession caused by outside pressures: the Common Market had closed its doors and suddenly we could not sell there but had to sell to the Soviet Union, China, and Japan;

3) the war over the Malvinas, which had easily aroused the enthusiasm of a naturally euphoric people.

Democracy is, of course, unstable in all Latin countries; there has never been an Anglo-Saxon democracy in a Latin country. First, Alfonsin will be treated as a God and then, in a few years, as a devil. But the younger generation is more pragmatic and more tolerant of democratic systems.

One must not forget, however, that people did not come to Argentina to become free, as they had to the United States; they were, as Catholics in the Catholic countries from which they came, already free from persecution. Instead they came to get rich.

Furthermore, the countries from which so many immigrants came—Spain, Italy, and Portugal—had all become fascist. The tendency is clearly there. Only war, and liberation by the United States, or the death of the dictators (Franco and Salazar), has liberated those countries from fascism. This is important in understanding the Argentine problem.

Alfonsin's Radical Party is trying to weaken both the Army and the trade unions at once—the two pillars of Peronism. It is a daring effort, but there is a better than 50% chance that Alfonsin will complete his six-year term.

LONG-TIME NUCLEAR CHIEF ADMIRAL CASTRO MADERO ON THE BOMB AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Vice Admiral Carlos Castro Madero became Chairman of the National Atomic Energy Commission (CENA) of Argentina on March 24, 1976; he was then both a Navy Captain and a physicist.

He explained his differences with the U.S. in these terms: "The Treaty of Tlateloco was signed in 1967 before I was at the Commission. It was irrelevant before the German-Brazilian nuclear deal."

"But when President Carter complained about the deal, the Brazilians told him that, if he wanted nuclear controls in Latin America, then the United States should sign Article I of Tlateloco. [Editor's Note: This Article applied to non-Latin American countries like our own who had possessions in the nuclear free zone; under the article, these states would "apply the statute of denuclearization in respect of warlike purposes" as defined in Tlateloco to their possessions. It is this article that the Argentineans used to complain about British nuclear submarines which, when used in war, constituted, they argued, a use of nuclear energy for warlike purposes within the denuclearized zone by a contracting power, Great Britain.]

"For the U.S. this meant denuclearizing the Canal Zone, the Guantanamo Naval Base in Cuba, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Carter signed.

"This put pressure on Argentina, and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance came to Argentina and talked to me. I wanted the technology for producing heavy water, by which I meant a heavy water plant. (Editor's Note: Heavy water is the key, but difficult to obtain, ingredient in the Candu nuclear plants which the Argentineans had bought from the Canadians and which run on natural—i.e., unenriched—uranium.) The two foreign ministers then agreed that the U.S. would give Argentina the technology for a reactor and for heavy water and would, also, ratify the Treaty.

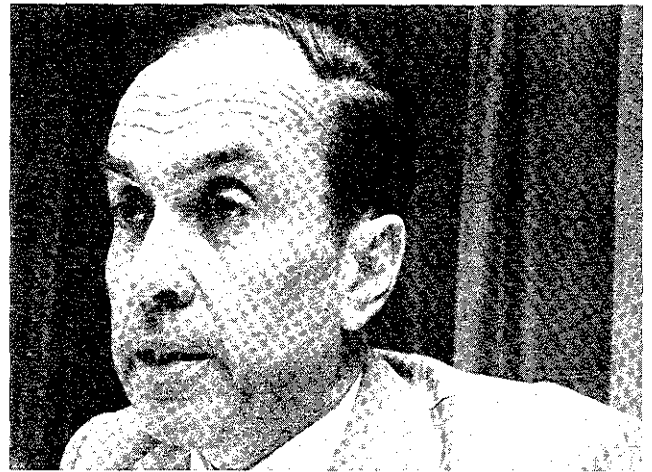
"But when the time came to ask the Carter Administration for the technology, Under Secretary Joseph Nye explained that the agreement read "technology for reactors; and heavy water"—the semicolon meaning that Argentina could have the heavy water but not the technology for it.

"I felt cheated and decided to try to learn about the agreements IAEA would want under the Treaty. I discovered that IAEA was planning to ban all nuclear explosives rather than all military uses—which is what the Treaty really called for. This persuaded me that Argentina could not make an agreement according to Tlateloco.

"In answer to your question, we never had any concrete applications for peaceful nuclear explosives. And I don't think there will be any in the future."

Question: Well then, should we not ban this loophole to prevent bombs from being made with it?

Answer: Well, look. To use this loophole, a country



*Vice Admiral Carlos Castro Madera
Former Chairman, Commission on Nuclear Energy*

would have to announce a project and show engineering plans. Next, the country could not store fissionable material above its real needs. Third, all developments would be controlled carefully.

Ques.: Well, what if the Brazilians announced that they just wanted to explode a bomb for "research"—as you once said was a possibility?

Ans.: I never said that. (Editor's Note: The December 8, 1983 New Scientist had quoted Admiral Madero as saying, on the occasion of work starting on nuclear plant Atucha II, in 1981:

"We have the ability to make a bomb but we have not taken a political decision to do so.... We do not rule out the possibility of a peaceful nuclear explosion for research.")

The bomb is not useful for Brazil. If they make one, they know that we can build a bomb. (!) If we do it, we know that, in seven or eight years, they will. And what would be the reaction of Chile and Peru? This is not useful for any of us. The bomb will also create mistrust. And since the long-range objective of all these nations is the integration of Latin America, it would be crazy to do it.

Ques.: What about prestige—countries doing it for prestige?

Ans.: The point has been to defend ourselves against the pressures from the North. If you ask me, you should sell more plants with safeguards; in this way you would create a net that would make any actions of ours transparent.

Ques.: But you have just announced a *secret* enrichment plant—what would be your price for full-scope (i.e., all plants covered by) safeguards?

Ans.: There is no price for full-scope safeguards, and now these unsafeguarded plants are hard-won. Don't ask us to put them under safeguards. We have now, through our efforts, almost an entire fuel cycle without safeguards.

Ques.: Are you worried, as we have heard some Argentineans are worried, about the loss of proprietary information through International Agency for Atomic Energy (IAEA) inspectors?

Ans.: Yes, just as they are worried about this in America.

Ques.: Do you know how to design safeguards that would satisfy all of the requirements you have mentioned?

Ans.: I don't know how.

Ques.: All of your reasons why it would be crazy to explode a single bomb for allegedly peaceful uses are valid. But they did not stop India from doing so.

Ans.: But they were worried about the Chinese.

Ques.: No, what would a single bomb do for them against the Chinese? They did it with an eye on Pakistan and all the bad results you mentioned happened!

You have set in motion something like a glacier—moving slowly but very hard to stop. At some point in the year 1990 or 2000 or 2010, perhaps after you are dead, some general at the head of a military regime, perhaps with waning political support, is going to say to himself: "If it was good politically for Castro Madero to announce that Argentina was in the "nuclear enrichment club," it should be even better politics to tell Argentines that they are in the "bomb club"—the real thing. And it only takes either Brazil or Argentina to do it to get the other to do it—and by then it may be easy for Chile to do it too. Isn't this very dangerous?"

Ans.: Perhaps you are right. I don't disagree. Now that we have achieved what we have, perhaps we could do more on limits. But would safeguards really help or would the nuclear powers ask something else? The London Club has gotten to the point where they actually say they are trying to avoid "nuclear technology proliferation," not just bomb proliferation.

Ques.: And isn't it true that a single bomb in Argentina—even the specter of a bomb—could be the last straw for those who might want to invest here? One-third of the population is in one city and the investment there would disappear in a single attack. With a country

that has had so much military rule, would not any serious banker turn away from Argentina if bombs were expected? And would not the resulting default threaten the entire world economy?

Ans.: I agree with you.

Ques.: Our scientists built the first atomic bombs and we have started an arms race which we cannot end. We have not the standing to *insist* that you do one thing or another; we have desperate problems of our own. But we do have the right to beg you to help us here in Argentina in Argentina's own interests. You, Admiral Madero, have the credibility and standing to limit the development you have started. Why not start a second career, now that you have retired, trying to get the Latin American nations to give up the loophole of peaceful uses.

[Admiral Madero's reaction was positive—although whenever he talked about rallying the Latin American nations to do this, it always had overtones of continuing the struggle, with these nations, against the London Club of suppliers. One gathers that the struggle between proud Argentineans and the admired and resented gringos in the North is a permanent staple in the Argentinean psyche.]

Admiral Madero noted that most physicists were appalled at the idea of building a nuclear bomb although he admitted that some did want to, "but these were very few."

Human Rights in the CENA

We asked Admiral Madero about the disappearances during his tenure as Chairman of CENA. He responded with feeling and defended his administration in these words:

"I took power on March 24, 1976 and was given a long list of people considered dangerous. My approach was to ask people that would be disruptive to resign but not to arrest them or kill them. Out of 2,000 employees, the military arrested eight for whose release I asked persistently until, finally, they were released. Ten I asked to resign. It is true that another eight disappeared. On the other hand, my administration was sufficiently tranquil and I was able to persuade 14 scientists to return from Iran to the CENA (they had left in the 1973-76 period)."

Madero could not justify what happened to the tortured and disappeared but he can imagine the feeling that caused it. He mused that the military academy taught integrity, how could they do this? The answer was that this kind of war may oblige it. He observed that every time his son was late, he worried. Phone calls threatened his family by name. The terrorists were insane. Even in jail, some of them openly threatened that, if they were let out, they would kill some more. In any case, the outcome was that "we won the war." He felt that "one good result was that young people today are persuaded that violence is not a good way to get results." □



A view of the city from the expressway.

(Continued from page 3)

be light penalties. On the other hand, as citizens they recognized the difficulties of getting the military—always a state within a state in Argentina—into civilian courts.

The cleverness in Alfonsin's strategy was to put the monkey on the military's back. If they failed to discipline their own, they would lose respect before the public and themselves—and no retribution, political or otherwise, could be leveled against civilians. Furthermore, the public was electrified by the sight of four former Presidents of the Republic being put under one kind of arrest or another. (But cynics thought the failure of these gentlemen to leave the country only signified their awareness that little would happen. And some believed, in an analogy to the charges that Ford agreed to pardon Nixon if Nixon would resign, that the military were assured by Alfonsin before the election that this method of trial by the military was his preferred one.)

One activist argued that Alfonsin should attack the Army more fiercely while they were in their present weakened state; they would only grow stronger later. But most seemed to acknowledge the limits of Alfonsin's political powers.

There were ancillary problems. One activist, Horace C., told of being jailed for six years and three months, during which time he, like 500 others, had been replaced at the University. He was suing for his job back. But how would the Alfonsin Government find 500 more jobs, and how could it throw out the replacements? That, he said, was its problem.

In the thousands of tortures, it was believed that 500 of Argentina's 30,000 doctors had participated. What would be done with them? [Timerman writes of the surprise of an Argentine doctor supervising his torture ("But I am the one who helps you") when he is appraised by Timerman that he may be guilty of a crime.]

The human rights activists confirm that the physicists and psychologists were hardest hit and that the repression was worse for Jews. (Jews are 1% of the Argentine population but appear to have been 10% of the disappeared, even as they are probably 10% to 20% of the intelligensia.) The activists say that 15,000 names of the disappeared have been compiled, and they think that 40,000 may have been lost in total. Many were simply not reported, out of fear or because their families were of humble origin. Thirty percent of the disappeared were workers.

There is, in Argentina, a numbers game on this subject between factions. The human rights activists document the plan they allege to exterminate the left through the following statistics:

The subversive terrorists, they argue, numbered about 4,000. But besides the 40,000 disappeared, there were 3,000 killed, 12,000 in prison at the peak, and 600,000 exiled. Obviously this reflects a determined effort to destroy political opponents.

A right-wing observer interviewed, however, said there had been 30,000 terrorists and only 700 documented to have disappeared! He asserted that 98% of those killed were guilty. (In fact, at the National Commission for the

ARGENTINE NEWS DURING THE WEEK

During the week of March 3-9, the following items in the Argentine press gave the flavor:

Item: There are people still in jail who were sentenced by military tribunals. Were they political prisoners or not? An editorial in the English-language Buenos Aires Herald advocates civilian review.

Item: A group of Army officers and non-commissioned officers return to a night club to beat up patrons because, on the night before, they had been "harassed" by civilians chanting anti-military slogans. (They actually disobey their regimental commander, who tries to stop them, and go on to oppress another cafe.) Later, military sources describe this incident as showing the "aggressiveness" of the population toward the military! And other reports we get suggest that the incident had a bizarre beginning. A wedding party in the area, strung out in a long convoy of cars, had been fired at from a fort it was passing by nervous soldiers convinced they were under attack! Miraculously no one in the party had been hurt despite machine gun firing from portholes in the fort. It was this that provoked, we were told, the slogan chanting on a later night.

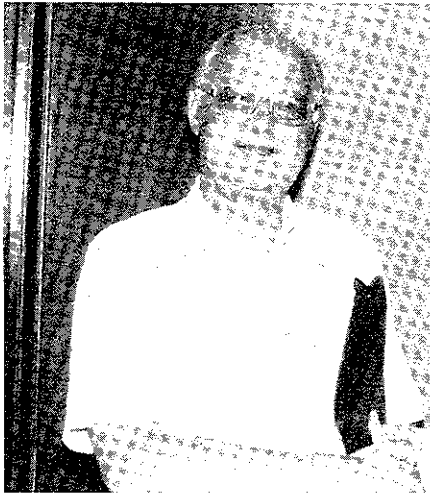
Item: An editorial in the Herald discusses the possibility that an expanded role for the technology-intensive Air Force at the expense of the manpower-intensive Army might reduce the chances of military intervention in political affairs; this is based on experiences in Britain, France, and Germany.

Item: The Buenos Aires province intelligence department has discontinued observing the law requiring the preparation of dossiers on the ideological and political background of all applicants for appointments or promotions in the province public administration.

Item: The graves of 310 persons buried between 1976 and 1983 have been uncovered in Rosario, of whom 100 died by violence.

Item: Interior Minister Antonio Troccoli speaks at the police academy and instructs them to "defend democracy to its utmost consequences, with unyielding faith in the future of the republic."

Item: A Radical Party deputy claims that foreign banks, their local representatives, and some labor union troublemakers have organized a "perfect plan" to "destabilize the government." The perfect plan turns out to be a weird conspiracy theory based on an alleged "Beri Report." The report by international economic consultants had cautioned investors not to get involved with Argentina until the smoke cleared—hardly an unreasonable recommendation. Later it turns out that there was no Beri report at all anyway but only remarks made at a seminar of potential investors. This was the "perfect" plan to destabilize Argentina!



Jose Federico Westercamp

Disappeared, in two months of activity, they have already assembled four thousand cases and are currently receiving 50 per day. One thousand of these had never appeared before on any list.)

One activist, B., tells of how he eluded the police by going underground for three months while his wealthy family, for whom he shows vast contempt, used their status as courtiers to the upper class to get the search ended. For the next year, however, whenever the many police cars with their sirens went by at night he was nervous; no assurance, he says, that the police were cooling it was worth much. Later he asked us if we would take a letter out of the country to North America! Evidently the fears of police surveillance did not end with the election, nor did the need felt by some to elude it.

Some human rights activists thought the political destruction of the Army's power was the only way to make Argentina democratic. Others thought that education had to be emphasized; where it used to be 22% of the budget, it had fallen to 8%. One father of a disappeared whom FAS had tried to help in 1976 said flatly:

"Argentina has no solution. The people have no democratic values and are inclined toward fascism. The material base is rich—maybe richer than the U.S.—and this has made them think they are superior. Argentines have a tendency to act in accordance with slogans, to like large marches and meetings, and to think chauvinistically. There is little social conscience. Now Argentina is economically dependent, and the Army has become the servant of the upper classes. The situation will be difficult for many years."

THE NUCLEAR SITUATION

Argentina has had a long love affair with things nuclear since the early days when a fraudulent scientist persuaded Juan Peron to announce, in the fifties, that Argentina had conquered controlled fusion!

Four days before Alfonsin took office, the long-time head of the Argentine nuclear energy commission (CENA) had announced—to great public satisfaction—that a secret enrichment plant had been built, unbeknownst to anyone, and that it had been able to enrich uranium with the

(Continued on page 10)

PHYSICIST JOSE WESTERCAMP— A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

Physics professor Jose Federico Westercamp, 67 years old, is the member of Argentina's scientific community most akin to FAS. A former Chairman of the Physics Department of the University of Buenos Aires, he is the leading Argentine scientific critic of the nuclear program's excesses. He also became a human rights activist after his son "disappeared" in 1975. (For these actions, Westercamp became, in 1983, a winner of the American Association for the Advancement of Science Award for Scientific Freedom and Responsibility.) For two frantic days, the Westercamps tried to find him. Through a relative who happened to work in the "Pink House" (i.e., the Argentine "White House"), young Westercamp was located and moved to a prison where he languished without trial for seven years until 1982. He had done nothing more than the usual student activism to deserve this.

Stimulated by this experience, Westercamp helped found, in 1975, the Permanent Assembly of Human Rights—at a time when its founders had to meet secretly in church locations that constantly varied. Later the Secretary of the Assembly was kidnapped and tortured and questioned at length by a masked individual who turned out to be the Buenos Aires Police Chief. (The hooded inquisitor, which continues a tradition of the Spanish Inquisition, appears to have evolved to protect the inquisitor against the revenge of relatives.) The police chief, General Camps, wanted to know where the money was coming from. After a year of this, the secretary was released; he had lost 65 pounds and was in very ill health.

In November, Professor Westercamp had had the temerity to mention in a press interview threats made by a CENA employee, Colonel Arguello, to an entire reprocessing team of physicists in 1976. ("I smell Communism everywhere and if you do not do what I tell you, you will be liquidated."—all this with a pistol on the desk.) Arguello promptly fired off a threatening telegram to Westercamp.

Elsewhere in the interview Westercamp chronicled the escalating costs of the program (the Arroyito plant had gone from an estimated \$350 million to a billion) and suggested that the CENA claim of having reprocessed "a few kilos" might well turn out to refer to "a few grams." Calling Castro Madero the "Peron of the CENA," he observed that CENA men at the Argentine Physicists' Association would "personally threaten you if you asked questions about missing physicists." His response was to say that he would not attend unless he could speak freely.

THE DEFENSE MINISTRY UNDER REORGANIZATION AND GROWING CIVILIAN CONTROL

Edward L. King's characteristic persistence and courage finally got us into the Defense Ministry to see the Public Affairs Officer, a Mr. Correa; only after meeting that individual face-to-face, we were told, could a further interview be considered.

Wandering around the 8th floor under the watchful eye of bank-style cameras, we got our first sign of the far-reaching changes going on in the military. Nobody knew where Correa was! And one burly communications officer finally exclaimed: "Who's Correa? So many new faces around here."

The secretaries have crucifixes in abundance, and one sign on a secretarial door says defensively: "Argentines: Right and Human."

The inhabitants of the building, whether in high-ranking uniforms or in well-fitted expensive suits, look like a different species of human from the ones we see at the human rights organizations, who resemble a mixture of our peaceniks and our middle class.

Correa examines us carefully and finally asks, "You're not spies are you?" Ed explains that he is interested in military reform and describes his so-relevant background. I note, without further explanation, that our organization was formed by scientists who built the first atomic bomb. (This is a saliva test; if they salivate, we assume the worst! In Libya, in 1975, they simply confirmed that, indeed yes, they would like one too!)

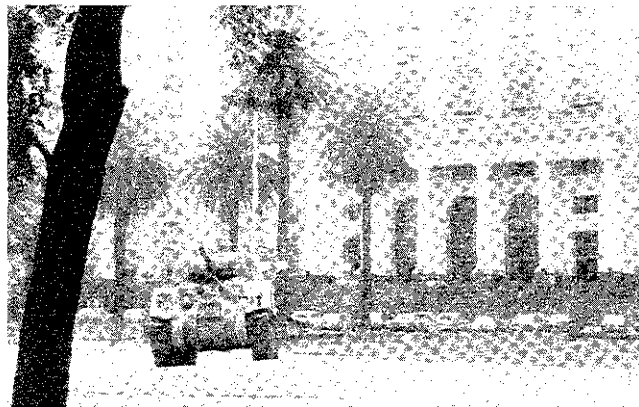
Mr. Correa says, without any explanation, that we can see a Captain. The Captain, seated in a nearby office, turns out to speak good English, and we began to chat.

He tells Ed that, under the new rules, only the President will be able to order emergency actions. Only Congress could declare war, and then there would be a war cabinet which could contain the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the head of the CIA, and the three chiefs of staff. Alfonsin wants to abolish the present draft and move toward a volunteer military.

"The President, Alfonsin, has assigned the military services far-reaching tasks of reorganization, including the size of the forces, the kinds of weapons, and the amount of research. Up till now, the services together had set their own collective budget! And then they had split it up between services according to the traditional percentage. [This was how Secretary of Defense Charlie Wilson handled things in the Eisenhower Administration!]"

"Now the budget will be handled by the Congress and allocated between the services according to military needs. Meanwhile, the President has set the goal of reducing the military costs from 6% to 3% of GNP. It will take years to do and will require cuts in manpower." [Those who object to this policy are being fired by the Minister of Defense.]

After I explained FAS' origins, I asked whether the Argentines were interested in building nuclear sub-



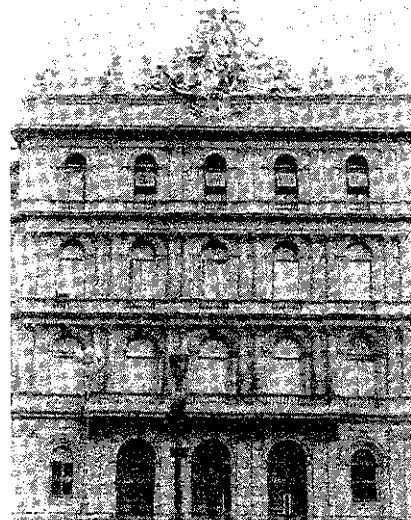
Sherman tank decorates Argentine Defense Ministry.

marines or, perhaps, a nuclear explosive for peaceful purposes. He flushed and said this was a sensitive subject. "Under this Government," he thought, "only nuclear plants would be permitted." There had never been any concrete plan for a "peaceful use" and one could not, he felt, tell a "peaceful bomb from a military bomb."

"Bombs," he said, "were bad for us. Chile would get them. We need an agreement against them, and not just among the Southern cone powers (Brazil, Chile, and Argentina) but throughout Latin America."

What about the Treaty of Tlatoloco? The problem seemed to be that the Americans wanted the Argentines to sign it. If I could persuade the American Government to denounce the Treaty, would Argentina sign it? He laughs: "Probably." He says I will find it extremely interesting to see Admiral Castro Madero later.

"The nuclear program," he feels, "has been the only Argentine success during this long period, and only because it had been pursued without politics throughout the period. If only everything else had been pursued in the same way!"



The "Pink House," Argentina's White House, from which President Alfonsin seeks to get the military under civilian control.

MANY FORCED RETIREMENTS

"President Alfonsin has changed all of the military leadership, choosing, as members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, men who ranked 26th and 30th in their services. As a consequence, the higher-ranking officers retired." [Since coups are made by active duty officers—egged on perhaps by retired ones—the change gives a measure of protection for at least some time to Alfonsin.]

By this time, we had realized that this Captain was no ordinary one. In fact, he is the senior adviser to the Defense Minister. Retired as a Captain ten years before, he had worked with the Radical Party during its period in the wilderness. A thoroughly decent person, he observed that many generals were so far right that they thought the Radical Party members were Communist. (The badly-named Radical Party is the moderate party in Argentina and the replacement of the now-defunct Conservative Party.) He said that one of Argentina's biggest problems was that if these super-conservative, almost fascist, elements did not permit the democratic left to engage in politics, the left would become guerrillas.

We still could not believe that this humane individual could be serving as Alfonsin's eyes and ears without having great difficulties, and we asked about it. "Oh no," he said, "the officers treat me very well. For example, the new Chief of Naval Operations used to be my operations officer!"

The captain said that the guerrillas had killed 5,000 soldiers and policemen. It would be hard to judge, five years later, those who had acted in an absolutely different era. The President had said that "The Country is not prepared to punish everybody," and so those who gave orders for unnecessary actions, or didn't control these actions properly, would be punished.

Morale in the service was very bad and the military are "so sad." The reorganization will keep them busy. "We want it and they want it."

What if bad times came again with a bad economy or whatever? "I believe that this President could muster the support of people even in very bad times. The debt is the most important problem—the others are within our grasp."



Anteroom of CELS, Center for Legal and Social Studies, where unofficial lists of disappeared are kept. The door, opened cautiously, leads to a wall decorated with posters. Above, mothers of disappeared demonstrate. To the left, a poster asks for information on the disappeared.

AN ARGENTINE OBSERVER

"This is a very special moment—a very special return to democracy. When institutions start to fall apart, all of your own values get confused and so there needs to be a restructuring of Argentine society as Argentina tries to find its identity again. Try to leave your preconceptions behind."

AN AMERICAN OBSERVER

"Argentine interest in peaceful nuclear explosions is an unfortunate echo of the Plowshares policy which America encouraged abroad earlier. But the Argentines have no particular project in mind. Argentina doesn't want to follow its signing with ratification until it knows what the safeguard agreements with IAEA will look like."

"Alfonsin is a very skillful politician, likeable, personable, and genuinely pacifist in his inclinations. Still, to get through six years, he will need incredible political sensitivity."

"The Argentines see the nuclear program as the one good project that has shown results—it is up there with 'mom' and 'apple pie.' Ten percent of the electricity is nuclear and, because of the recession, there is a surplus of energy."

"Admiral Castro Madero worked hard to make the nuclear program a nationalistic issue—possibly hoping that a strong foreign response would play well here. He is sincere and smart, a smart political admiral."

"Argentines are very pleasant people on an individual basis and very family oriented. But in politics they are very violent and have little respect for the other fellow's views. At cocktail parties they will say: 'This politician ought to be killed'—it is chilling to hear them."

"One reason there were no trials of the disappeared was that judges, who function here without juries, would get letters saying that their families would be killed if they decided the wrong way—threats from both sides. So the judges gave no decisions at all but postponed decisions. The new democracy will stand or fall on how effective the judicial system can be."

"Alfonsin was going to punish those who ordered abuses or committed excesses in carrying them out. He had been one of the few Argentine politicians who spoke out on human rights during the terror, and he thinks he may owe his life to the U.S. interest in, and pressure for, human rights."

(Continued from page 7)

gaseous diffusion process. Argentines celebrated joining the nuclear "club"!

In combination with a handful of nuclear plants in existence or under construction, and a plant for reprocessing nuclear wastes from those plants, now under construction, Argentina had a virtual "complete fuel cycle." And only those plants which had been built with foreign help had been placed under safeguards.

A key issue for our trip was to determine whether and how Argentina might ratify the Treaty of Tlateloco, which would turn Latin America into a nuclear free zone. This Treaty was encouraged by the Cuban missile crisis of 1963, and was ready for signature by 1968. Argentina's failure to ratify, after signing it, was preventing the Treaty from coming into force.

President Alfonsín had created a three-man commission to report on this (the Foreign Minister, a key adviser named Jorge Sabato, and the Presidential Secretary-General) but its report had been delayed.

The key problem involved the issue of "peaceful nuclear explosives." Argentina had fought to keep the Treaty open to such a possibility, and, indeed, the Treaty, which deals with nuclear "weapons," defines a nuclear weapon as

"...any device which is capable of releasing nuclear energy in an uncontrolled manner and which has a group of characteristics that are appropriate for use for warlike purposes."

Thus it seemed to permit nuclear explosives that did *not* have these characteristics. The U.S., on the other hand, had ratified this Treaty with an "interpretation" that all nuclear explosives could be used for military purposes and hence that the Treaty banned peaceful nuclear explosives. And the International Agency for Atomic Energy (IAEA), which was required to negotiate the implementing safeguards, was equally adamant that it could not draft safeguard agreements that permitted "peaceful bombs" without permitting bombs in general.

Our first interview on this subject was at the Foreign Ministry, with Undersecretary and Ambassador Vincentes Arnaud, who is in charge of such matters. Here we came to see, in action, the characteristically legalistic Argentine style.

Argentina, he said, was in total support of the Tlateloco Treaty, in spirit, letter, and wording. (This was a diplomatic way of saying that the original understanding of the Treaty was to permit peaceful nuclear explosives—Argentina and Brazil had played major roles in drafting the Treaty.)

Indeed, he went on, Argentina was against three violations by *others*:

1) The U.S. had—under cover of an "interpretation"—taken a prohibited "reservation." (Here he was referring to the U.S. interpretation that all nuclear explosives were prohibited.)

2) The IAEA had stalled on designing safeguard agreements consistent with the Treaty—another violation.

3) The British had refused to say whether they had nuclear weapons on their ships. (Using a U.S.-style formulation, the British had said:

"It would not be in the interest of national security to depart from the long-standing practice, observed by successive governments, neither to confirm nor deny the presence or absence of nuclear weapons in any particular place at any particular time.")

As far as Ambassador Arnaud was concerned, this failure to respond was another violation, although he said there was no evidence that bombs were on their ships. (This fear has become a front page issue in Argentina. Headlines ask whether there are nuclear weapons on the Malvinas. And the British fleet, in any case, is within the nuclear free zone prescribed for Latin America when in the vicinity of the Falklands. The British have, incidentally, agreed to the Treaty, and waived the requirement that all others agree, so Britain is a party; Argentina, of course, is not.)

The Ambassador felt that recent articles in the Economist had hurt the U.S. image by describing various kinds of help which America had given the British during the war.

In any case, however, he did not know what the President might do about the Treaty. First the Commission would have to decide, and then the President, and then the Congress.

ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW

We visited one of the three members of the President's Commission for an off-the-record discussion about Argentine affairs in general. While we cannot report on the wide-ranging and rapid discussion, something should be said about the interviewee: Jorge Sabato.

This man is considered to be an especially key adviser to President Alfonsín.* A lawyer, and a former worker in the field of mathematical simulation, he has many of the intellectual mannerisms, gestures, and methods of argument of the late Herman Kahn—also once a specialist in mathematical simulation. But Sabato has great sweetness and lack of pretension; he has refused any position in the Government except that of adviser, but he has been given a chauffeured car, which he enjoys. He is, in any event, a thoroughly and obviously decent individual. And his judgments seemed to combine idealism with pragmatism—a clear sense of the limits that could be achieved with no question about which side to be on. □



First National Bank of Boston: one of many American banks represented in Buenos Aires.

*The next week, Jorge Frederico Sabato was appointed one of two Vice Foreign Ministers in the Foreign Ministry; as "State Secretary for Security and Special Affairs," he will be assigned such issues as the Malvinas, the Beagle Channel, and the Treaty of Tlateloco.

AN ARGENTINE BANKER ANALYZES THE DILEMMA

"Inflation is destroying us, despite the fact that this country is one of enormous wealth. The wealth arises in large part from the fact that Argentina is a major low cost food producer. It produces wheat cheaply because no fertilizer is necessary to produce grain, especially wheat, in the very fertile land. And it produces beef cheaply because the cattle use natural pasture—they are simply put out to graze. Since the population uses relatively little wheat and meat—being only 30 million—there is a large surplus for export.

The country is also self-sufficient in oil and has enormous potential for gas—55 years of proven resources. (The homes are heated with gas.) There are no racial problems, no religious problems, and the best distribution of income south of the Rio Grande.

Argentina was a major economic success through World War II, but after the war, Argentina became hooked on import substitution—making at home things that would otherwise have to be imported. It was something that the international banking authorities then thought was sensible—so they based their loans on efforts of this kind. And it was something that was politically very useful for Peron.

Peron created a union movement and the Peronist workers wanted the industrial jobs which the import substitution would provide. (Certainly these workers saw no place for themselves in a country that just exported wheat and meat.)

Accordingly, protectionism began to feed on itself. Agriculture was subsidizing industry which was protecting itself against foreign competition.

The result was lower-quality industrial goods and higher costs—hence a lower quality of life. The most inefficient companies, those that went bankrupt despite the protection, were taken over by the Government and proceeded to run even more inefficiently.

Moreover, the military had ideas of strategy that called on Argentina to be self-sufficient in strategic areas: nuclear, communications, and steel. The military even started companies in such areas.

As a consequence of all this, the state ran huge deficits which grew exponentially. By December 1983, Government revenues were 25% of the expense base—in other words, 75% of the expenses were paid for by the Government printing money. (In January, it was 40% of the expense base.) As a result the inflation is now at 450 percent per year. (People get a special interest rate for putting their money away for one week!)

Such inflation is like an Arctic white-out in which the horizon disappears. One cannot program one's activities because one doesn't know what the relative value of goods will be. It is a fundamental problem of this inflation that it is not, and cannot be, perfectly indexed.

Thus it breeds speculation. All goods in the society become like stocks in a stock market. Persons speculate in whatever seems underpriced and everyone must speculate to survive.

The income of workers is constantly shifting—and as a consequence, living in Argentina is like living in a country under constant revolt. (Editor's Note: While we were there, the newspapers reported that scientists had lost 15% of their real income last year while plastics workers had gone up 79%!)

Despite currency controls, capital leaves the country easily, and the inflation produces such complications that tax collection is impaired. There is a sense of total disorder.

The large middle class cannot defend itself against inflation, and this is one reason that the children of this class are often terrorist—they saw their parents being destroyed by the inflation after working all their lives for an adequate pension.

The \$44 billion lent by 300 American banks was spent on things with long payback periods—the nuclear program, roads, etc.; as a result, it is not helping much now.

Furthermore, the last economics minister, Martinez de Hoz, tried to reverse the Peronist protectionism and began favoring imports. (Editor's Note: A leftist economist had explained to us earlier that the military wanted to deindustrialize Argentina to break the power of the Peronist unions and to return to a romantic past in which agricultural values predominated.) Imports were favored by overvaluing the peso, and the Government overdid it—with Argentina going from one extreme to another.

Besides long paybacks, some of the bank-loaned money went to interest payments, deficits in the balance of trade, and the sending of tourists abroad (with the overvalued peso). There was a near war with Chile and a war with Britain, all of which cost a great deal in weapons.

But the country is now back on a democratic path—and under a democracy these past mistakes would have been impossible, since the screams would have been heard from sectors that were, under the military, ignored.

Now, no new money is coming down to Argentina. No single bank can be paid off, lest this act start a "run" on other banks. On the other hand, any one bank can cause a default. Chapter I in banking in these cases is to get everyone to sit still and notice that the delinquent borrower is, nevertheless, a good credit risk in the longer run.

Question: Did the banker ever discuss the problems that might result if Argentina exploded even a single bomb for "peaceful nuclear purposes"?

Answer: For a country like Argentina to do such a thing, with its record of instability and military intervention in the Government, would generate a lot of concern outside the country. But the Government is going to cut the budget of CENA, and Alfonsin is very much a peaceful man.

U.S. AGREEMENT PROHIBITS FRANCE FROM MILITARIZING SUPERPHENIX

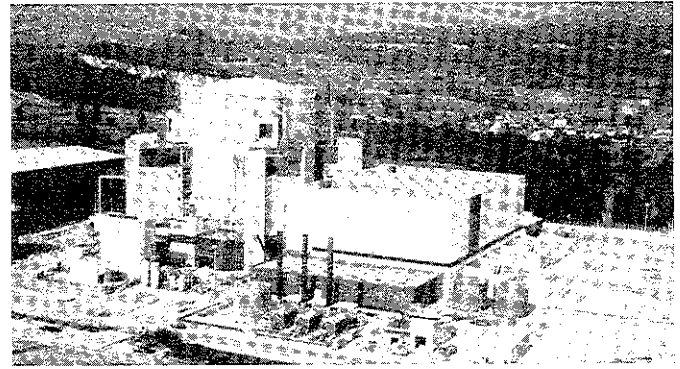
An important non-proliferation policy is to clearly separate civilian and military nuclear programs. The U.S. traditionally has been the leader in this area. Not all nuclear weapons states, however, believe in separating their civilian from their military programs. France has not ruled out using plutonium that will be produced in the commercial breeder reactor Superphenix in its nuclear weapons program. The reactor is scheduled to begin commercial operation in late 1984. If France decides to use Superphenix simultaneously as a military and a civilian facility then it would be the first dual-use reactor where plutonium restricted to peaceful uses by international agreements would commingle with plutonium destined for a country's nuclear weapons program.

It is France's policy to refuse to disclose which, if any, of its nuclear facilities are actually used for military production. However, last fall a Socialist Deputy in the French National Assembly said, "Choosing the fast breeder is without a doubt the best choice to assure both energy independence, and also national military independence. In effect, the fast breeder is the only one actually capable of providing plutonium containing more than 95 percent plutonium-239 in sufficient quantities to supply the development of our tactical nuclear force."

Breeder reactors are well suited to produce very high-quality plutonium for nuclear weapons. They are capable of converting non-weapons grade plutonium in the core into high-quality plutonium (>95-97 percent plutonium-239) in the blanket. Each year Superphenix will produce enough of this type of plutonium for 60 warheads which could be used for the expanding French nuclear force.

The U.S. is indirectly involved in Superphenix. The enriched uranium in the fuel of European reactors has often been provided by the U.S. At least 20 to 30 percent of the plutonium used in the initial loading of Superphenix was separated from uranium in spent fuel originally enriched in the U.S.

Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and to a small extent the United Kingdom are also involved in



Superphenix: Plutonium for 60 bombs a year?

Superphenix as joint owners. All these countries, except the U.K., are contributing plutonium, which was separated from spent fuel from commercial nuclear reactors in Europe, to the core of Superphenix.

Most of the relevant international agreements and treaties, such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Agreements for Cooperation between countries in Europe and the nuclear suppliers Australia or Canada, cannot stop France from using its entire portion of the plutonium produced by Superphenix in its military program. However, the Agreement for Cooperation between the U.S. and the European Atomic Energy Community, which includes France, requires that if U.S.-origin plutonium is used in Superphenix, then the reactor cannot be used for any military purpose and the reactor must be safeguarded against any potential diversion to military programs.

Lack of U.S. action to stop any militarization of Superphenix can be seen only as a further erosion of the U.S. commitment to the non-weapons states, expressed in the NPT, to limit the nuclear arms race. The U.S. must seek guarantees from France that Superphenix will not be used to produce plutonium for its nuclear weapons program.

—David Albright

(David Albright is an FAS researcher in non-proliferation.)

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