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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

[REDACTED]

TO : The Ambassador
THRU: Minister Chaplin

DATE: April 8, 1976

DECONTROL

FROM : Agricultural Attache, James P. Rudbeck

SUBJECT: Ford Foundation Call Re Employees at Castelar

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This morning I went to see Lucio Reca the former Secretary of Agriculture and he sends you his greetings. He was completely aware of the situation at Castelar - a research, experiment station of INTA, a dependency of the Secretariat of Agriculture. He said that last Wednesday or Thursday around 13 or 15 employees were fired as part of the government wide purge of so called "subversives". These employees ranged from common workers, to union delegates to professional technicians. Seven employees of the Agricultural Economics Studies Section were fired including the Director, and Ing. Martinez. Of those fired, Martin Piñeiro, Edward Trigo, Alfredo Monza and Jose Costa were picked-up at their desks by the security forces and taken to jail in a bus. Raul Fiorentino was also picked-up and jailed. All are being held incomunicado according to Reca, but their families are able to get food and clothing to them. All are being held under "subversion" charges. The other two members of this department were simply fired. Several very junior members remain in the department, but in effect, it has been stripped.

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/APS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
Exemption(s):
 Release Excise Deny
Classify as In Part In Full *Declassify*
Extend as Downgrade to
Date Declassify on Reason

Of the five arrested, three (Piñeiro, Trigo and Fiorentino) had received training in the U.S. under the sponsorship of the Ford Foundation. The Foundation was providing financial support for this agricultural economics studies department and in September signed a new financial support agreement.

Begin not for Transmission

Reca said that the security forces had long regarded Castelar as being a center for subversives and for training subversives. He does not know all of the five jailed personally. He said that Piñeiro had been Under-Secretary for Agricultural Economics under Secretary Giberti and although he doubts that he is a guerrillero, he-Reca-has had philosophical differences with him as he also apparently had with Goberti. He said that Trigo was generally known as a conservative while Fiorentino was known to have leftist leanings, although he does not know either of them personally.

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He said that Darell Fienup, the former head of the Agricultural Economics Program of the Ford Foundation here and now in Porto Alegre under a joint AID-Michigan State Project is the best person to consult about the character of all of these individuals.

End part not for Transmission

Reca says that Ing. Martinez, the former director of the Agricultural Economics Studies Section, has been in telephone contacts with Richard Dye of the Ford Foundation in New York. He says that Dye is informed of the situation and that Martinez's objective in contacting Dye is to inform him of the situation, solicit outside support or assistance, and to seek alternate employment for those fired. Reca confirmed that Dye was here in Buenos Aires last week at the time these employees were fired.

Eduardo Descalzo of our office also talked to a good friend of his at Castelar who also confirmed that 15 employees have been fired and some were arrested. This individual called those employees fired "communists" and expressed surprise at how the Ford Foundation could have associated with some of them and how the U.S. Embassy could have given some of them visas to study in the U.S. He was not specific as to which individuals were "communists". He said that the security forces had marked these 15 or so employees. This individual is an old friend of Descalzo, the chief of a major section at Castelar and has also received training in the U.S., but some 20 years ago.

Further Background

Several years ago, the Ford Foundation had a project to create an agricultural economics profession here in Argentina. Around 30 or 40 young promising individuals were sent to the U.S. for advanced training. However, as I recall, many of these individuals had difficulties finding employment here in Argentina, at least a salaries commensurate with their levels of expectations. Several left the country. The Foundation attempted to establish "cluster" study groups for those that could not find other employment. Apparently, the "cluster" at Castelar was the only one that survived and was still receiving support from the Foundation.

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