

11-3-1987

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Recommended Citation

Neagle, John. "Creation Of Argentine-brazilian Free Trade Zone Not Likely Before 2000." (1987). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/notisur/1059>

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Creation Of Argentine-brazilian Free Trade Zone Not Likely Before 2000

by John Neagle

Category/Department: General

Published: Tuesday, November 3, 1987

In statements to the press on Oct. 27, Argentina's Undersecretary of Industrial Development, Beatriz Nofal, asserted that despite certain journalistic reports to the contrary, the establishment of a free trade zone between Argentina and Brazil remains at the "discussion stage" on the part of both governments. If decisions are eventually adopted to create such a facility, she said, it could be expected to materialize no earlier than "at the beginning of the next century." Nofal stated that at present "technical studies" on the advantages and disadvantages to specific economic sectors in both nations are being prepared by respective governments. In any event, she said, the eventual establishment of a free trade area would not be implemented in an abrupt across-the-board fashion. Instead, said Nofal, it would occur by means of a gradual reduction in tariff barriers. Finally, the undersecretary emphasized that the creation of a free trade zone will not be up to technical personnel or ministers of either government, but rather will be voted on by members of the Argentine and Brazilian national legislatures. (Basic data from DYN, 10/27/87)

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