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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Mr. Szainik - Disappearance and Robbery

PARTICIPANTS: Roberto D. Graetz, Rabbi  
Temple Emmanuel, Buenos Aires  
F. Allen Harris, Political Officer

DATE: October 27, 1977

PLACE: American Embassy

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Rabbi Graetz called at the Embassy to discuss the human rights situation in Argentina and to seek help in a particular case. He is the Jewish community representative on the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights.

Rabbi Graetz asked for U.S. assistance regarding the case of a Mr. Szainik, a member of his congregation who has family in the United States. In late September security forces came to Mr. Szainik's apartment house. When they found no one at home in his apartment, they went to the apartment of his father-in-law which is in the same building. Mr. Szainik's father-in-law was taken downstairs, held in a car and forced to identify his son-in-law as he entered the apartment house.

His son-in-law was then "arrested". When the family went to the "arresting officer's" police station to seek information regarding Mr. Szainik's arrest they were informed that no arrest order had been issued. Mr. Szainik has not been seen since.

Mr. Szainik was the owner of an automobile and bus repair shop. Three or four days after his disappearance, several persons, identifying themselves as security agents, appeared at Mr. Szainik's shop. They informed the employees that they were conducting a search for hidden weapons. They then asked the employees to identify Mr. Szainik's tools and the bus that he had recently purchased to rent to bus owners who were having their vehicles repaired. The security agents put Mr. Szainik's tools in the bus and drove away.

The Szainik family prepared a "denuncia" regarding Mr. Szainik's disappearance and the robbery of his tools and bus. They brought it to the local police station, but the police refused to accept it.

The family then retained a lawyer who submitted a Habeas Corpus petition regarding Mr. Szainik's disappearance and included in the petition information regarding the theft of the tools and the bus.

Rabbi Graetz indicated that there was concern in the Jewish community regarding this flagrant case. He planned to discuss this matter with Rabbi Rosenthal and Mr. Geller during his upcoming visit in the U.S.

Clearance: POL:AGFreeman

POL:FAHarris:eg

November 2, 1977