

Mr. Chaplin will call to discuss
this with you.

JL

E.O.: N/A

Tags: PFOR, ~~RXNT~~, SCPN, AR, US

To: Secstate WashDC Immediate

Subject: AP Story on Ambassador's meeting with President

For AR/ECA - Rondon

Ref: Rondon/Chaplin telcon 9/23/76

1. Embassy received inquiries from most press services in BA about meeting with president. Uniform response was that any comment would have to come from President Videla. Afternoon of 9/22 (subsequent to filing of story) AP called to ask ~~press officer~~ ^{Alan} if (he) had any comment on statements attributed to "sources close to Amb Hill", and received another no comment response.

Handwritten note:
 "Sources close to Amb Hill" -
 Rondon Embassy - 10/23/76

2. AP was sufficiently cooperative to provide information on source which made it possible for Embassy to identify him conclusively. There was one source, not several as story implies, and he was Robert Benjamin of _____ Benjamin has long been known to Ambassador ~~from~~ since latter's appointment to Mexico. Benjamin met with Ambassador ~~2 days~~ prior to meeting with Videla. ~~XXXXXX~~ Views and statements attributed to Ambassador by Benjamin are incorrect and self-serving. Ambassador is particularly offended at implication that ~~XXXX~~ human rights issue raised only as sop to Democratic congressmen. Ambassador's position on this issue is on record in Department and was amply discussed in his recent consultation.

3. Benjamin's remarks, if correctly ^{reported} ~~intended~~, appear to be self-serving in that his firm has public relations contract with GOA, but/has told GOA it unwilling to be apologist for human rights violations.

4. Meeting with Videla has been fully reported in other messages. To avoid being drawn into situations/which questions about his meeting with president

Videla might be raised, Ambassador had already cancelled scheduled luncheons with American Chamber and another businessmen's group this week. Ambassador considered and rejected proposal to issue statement that AP report incorrect, in that it inevitably would elicit further question x on which ~~parts were~~ ^{was} incorrect, ~~and possibly~~ ^{it could} keep this fragile ~~issue~~ ^{issue} in the air an additional day. In the event that circumstances further require Department to respond to questions about the story, Ambassador is ~~entirely~~ ~~ready~~ fully prepared to stand on his record on this issue, ~~hoping~~ ~~only that any departmental statements about his position would minimize~~ ~~damage to relations with~~

H025

ARGENTINA END ML H016 90
BY ALFONSO CHARDY
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA, SEPT 22 (AP)--PRESIDENT FORD SUPPORTS THE ARGENTINE MILITARY GOVERNMENT BUT WOULD LIKE TO SEE IT IMPROVE ITS HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD, SOURCES CLOSE TO U.S. AMBASSADOR ROBERT HILL SAID WEDNESDAY.

MEANWHILE, FIVE LEFTIST GUERRILLA SUSPECTS WERE KILLED BY SECURITY FORCES IN CLASHES NEAR BUENOS AIRES, RAISING TO 904 THE NUMBER OF POLITICAL DEATHS THIS YEAR, SECURITY SOURCES SAID. THEY SAID A POLICEMAN AND A WOMAN TERRORIST SUSPECT WERE WOUNDED IN THE ACTIONS.

HUMAN RIGHTS DOMINATED A ONE-HOUR MEETING BETWEEN HILL AND GEN. JORGE VIDELA, THE ARGENTINE MILITARY PRESIDENT, ON TUESDAY AT THE GOVERNMENT HOUSE, THE SOURCES SAID. NEITHER THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE NOR THE U.S. EMBASSY SAID WHAT WAS DISCUSSED.

(THE: 3'D GRAF)
DAIENS SEPT 22.

AMS 13:14 EDT SEPT 22.

*CONVICT TO BE TRIED IF HR IS PROB.
WILL NOT DEFEND HR*

H016

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ARGENTINA NL THREE TAKES TOTAL 480

BY ALFONSO CHADY

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA, SEPT 22 (AP)--PRESIDENT FORD SUPPORTS THE ARGENTINE MILITARY GOVERNMENT BUT WOULD LIKE TO SEE IT IMPROVE ITS HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD, SOURCES CLOSE TO U.S. AMBASSADOR ROBERT HILL SAID WEDNESDAY.

THEY SAID THIS IS WHAT HILL TOLD GEN. JORGE VIDELA, THE ARGENTINE MILITARY PRESIDENT, DURING A ONE-HOUR MEETING AT THE GOVERNMENT HOUSE ON TUESDAY. NEITHER THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE NOR THE U.S. EMBASSY SAID WHAT WAS DISCUSSED.

THE SOURCES SAID THAT HILL TOLD VIDELA THAT THE FORD ADMINISTRATION SUPPORTS MILITARY LEADERS BUT THAT SOME DEMOCRAT CONGRESSMEN HAVE BEEN PUTTING PRESSURE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT CHARGES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS HERE.

THEY SAID THE PRESSURE INCREASED AFTER LAST MONTH'S ARREST AND SUBSEQUENT DEPORTATION OF A U.S. ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST AND LAST WEEK'S ARMED ABDUCTION OF AN AMERICAN MENNONITE WOMAN.

THE SOURCES DID NOT SAY WHAT VIDELA TOLD HILL. A U.S. EMBASSY SPOKESMAN DECLINED COMMENT AND DESCRIBED THE MEETING AS "NOTHING UNUSUAL".

IN WASHINGTON, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE, HEADED BY REP. DONALD FRASER, D-MINN. HAS SCHEDULED HEARINGS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN ARGENTINA BEGINNING NEXT WEDNESDAY.
(MORE).

ARG 12:30 EDT, SEPT 22

H0173

BUENOS AIRES ARGENTINE NL H016 ADD: WEDNESDAY.

THE HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL, A WASHINGTON-BASED GROUP OF LIBERALS INCLUDING SOME SUPPORTERS OF DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CONTENDER JIMMY CARTER, HAS URGED CONGRESS TO CUT OFF MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID TO ARGENTINA.

LAST FRIDAY THE ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON, ARNALDO MUSICH, RESIGNED AND DIPLOMATIC SOURCES SAID THE REASON WAS HE COULD NO LONGER STAND PRESSURES FROM LIBERAL U.S. GROUPS OVER HUMAN RIGHTS.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS CHARGES STEM FROM LIBERALS AND LEFTISTS WHO SAY RIGHT-WING TERRORISTS IN ARGENTINA, BLAMED FOR HUNDREDS OF ABDUCTIONS AND MURDERS THIS YEAR, ARE REALLY MILITARY OR POLICE OFFICERS CONDUCTING A REPRISAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST LEFTIST OVER LEFT-WING GUERRILLA ATTACKS. THE GOVERNMENT DENIES IT.

IN THE LATEST ACTION, THE ARGENTINE ACTORS GUILD SAID FOUR ACTORS, ALL LITTLE KNOWN, HAVE DISAPPEARED FROM THEIR HOMES AND MAY HAVE BEEN KIDNAPED. NEWS CIRCLES ALSO SAID THAT FOUR JOURNALISTS, INCLUDING TWO EDITORS, HAVE BEEN ARRESTED IN THE PROVINCES.

THE FAMILY OF THE KIDNAPED AMERICAN WOMAN, PATRICIA ERB, 19, OF JACKSON, MINN. SAID THEY STILL HAD NO NEWS OF HER, 13 DAYS AFTER SHE WAS TAKEN FROM HER FAMILY HOME IN BUENOS AIRES BY ARMED MEN WHOM HER FATHER DESCRIBED AS POLICEMEN. HER FATHER, JOHN D. ERB, A MENNONITE PASTOR FROM MESSTON, KAN., HAS BEEN IN ARGENTINA FOR THE LAST 25 YEARS. (MORE).

AMS 12:36 EDT SEPT 22.

H013

BUENOS AIRES ARGENTINE NL H017 : YEARS.

HER FATHER HAS SAID SHE WAS APPARENTLY INVOLVED WITH LEFTIST GROUPS AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF BUENOS AIRES, WHICH MAY HAVE HAD LINKED TO MARXIST GUERRILLAS.

THE PRIEST WHO WAS ARRESTED AND DEPORTED, THE REV. JAMES MARTIN WEEKS OF THE LASALETTE NOVITIATE IN HARTFORD, CONN, WAS ACCUSED OF BEING A SUBVERSIVE. THE U.S. GOVERNMENT FILED A FORMAL PROTEST WITH THE MILITARY REGIME BECAUSE WEEKS WAS HELD INCOMMUNICADO.

EARLIER THIS YEAR, SHORTLY AFTER THE MILITARY OVERTHREW AND ARRESTED PRESIDENT ISABEL PERON IN A BLOODLESS COUP LAST MARCH 24, TWO WEST GERMANS DISAPPEARED AND HAVE NOT BEEN HEARD FROM. WEST GERMAN SOURCES HERE SAY THEY MAY HAVE BEEN KIDNAPED AND KILLED BY RIGHTISTS.

LOCAL FINANCIAL CIRCLES FEAR THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS CHARGES COULD AFFECT INTERNATIONAL LOANS TO THIS COUNTRY. HOWEVER THE WORLD BANK GRANTED A \$115--MILLION CREDIT TO ARGENTINA FOR ELECTRICAL PROJECTS ON TUESDAY, THE GOVERNMENT SAID.
END (CHADY).

AHS 12:45 EDT SEPT 22.

HQ46

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BUENOS AIRES ARGENTINE NL HQ18 ADD: SAID.
IN CORDOBA, ARGENTINA'S SECOND LARGEST CITY AND INDUSTRIAL
CENTER 450 MILES TO THE NORTHWEST, TROOPS PEACEFULLY SEIZED
A TRUCK PLANT OF THE ITALIAN-OWNED FIAT AUTOMAKER AND ARRESTED
FOUR MEN DESCRIBED AS LEFTIST ACTIVISTS, THE ARMY SAID.

IT SAID ONE OF THE MEN WAS PICKED UP WHILE PASSING OUT
LEAFLETS OF THE LEFT-WING PERONIST MONTONERO GUERRILLAS AND
THE OTHER THREE WERE DETAINED WHEN TRYING TO START A STRIKE.
(END, CHADY).

HAS17:19EST 89-22-76

TELEGRAM

INDICATE
 COLLECT
 CHARGE TO

FROM
Ameibassy BUENOS AIRES

CLASSIFICATION
~~SECRET~~

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, AR, US
SUBJECT: My Call on President Videla

ACTION: Secstate WASHDC IMMEDIATE

~~SECRET~~ BUENOS AIRES ~~XXXX~~ 6177



AMB
DCM
POL-3
CONS
LEGAT
DAO
POL/R
CHRON

1. I called on President Videla at Casa Rosada this morning at 11:15 and spent almost 1 1/2 hours with him. A report on our discussion of US-Argentine relations--especially with respect to human rights issue--will follow by septel. Points of immediate interest were as follows:

2. President Videla apologized and said he was not yet in a position to give me the name of the new Ambassador to the United States. He did say, however, that it would not be General Miro as several radio and press reports here indicated this morning. He said he hoped to have the name soon and would inform the Embassy as soon as possible (note: Mrs. Musich called my wife this morning before following her husband to Washington. She expressed sorrow upon cutting short their assignment, and said her only regret was that she and her husband had not been able to complete his mission).

DRAFTED BY: POL:WSSMITH:CC <i>WSS</i>	DRAFTING DATE 9/21/76	TEL. EXT. 128	CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED BY: AMB:RCHILL <i>R</i>
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CLEARANCES:

A/DCM:WBeal *WB*

6/7

3. Gwenda Mae Loken Case. I discussed the Loken case with President Videla, pointing out to him the extremely difficult conditions under which she is being held and the fact that she is pregnant. The President responded that Interior Minister has given instructions for the judicial process to be terminated quickly, i.e. for there to be a speedy trial and sentencing. When that is done, he assured me, she will be expelled from the country immediately under order of executive decree.

4. Patricia Erb Case. I also pressed the President for any news concerning Patricia Erb. The President said that GOA has not been able to find any trace of her and has no idea where she is. He promised, however, to stay in contact and to notify me immediately of any new developments in the case. He indicated that when she is found (if she is found) GOA will expel her from the country (and he implied that it would do so before any judicial process might be initiated).


HILL