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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
TELEGRAM

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FROM

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

CLASSIFICATION

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

GDS
 PGOV PINT AR
 President Videla's First Anniversary Address

SECSTATE WASHDC

AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
 AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
 AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
 AMEMBASSY LIMA
 AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
 AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ BUENOS AIRES 2494

REF: Buenos Aires 2336

1. SUMMARY. Videla's anniversary speech to nation contained no surprises. He justified the military coup, summed up progress of first year of efforts to bring order and stability to country, and inaugurated a "period of creation" during which Argentines will reform themselves, conduct dialogue on political and economic future, and prepare a proposal for national unity. Only when these steps are accomplished will nation be ready for establishment of new order and relinquishment of power by military. Substance and tone of delivery of speech were sober and philosophic, committing GOA to nothing concrete and setting no real schedule for movement. Moderation appears to be the policy, however, and options for GOA

DRAFTED BY:

POL:RSSteven: jr

DRAFTING DATE

4/4/77

TEL. EXT.

121

CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED BY

A/POLCOUNS:AGFREEMAN

REFERENCES:

USIS: HWoodward
 ECOM: JCAmott

DCM: MChaplin

AMB: RCHill

and Argentina remain reasonably open. END SUMMARY.

2. General Videla addressed nation on radio and TV for 30 minutes on evening of March 31, reporting on his first year as President and suggesting course military plan to follow in short to medium term future. Videla's image as austere, reasonable man, without the harshness or stridency in public speaking tone of a Pinochet, left ~~prison~~ listeners with impression of firmness but nothing of the stereotypical Latin American military caudillo.

3. He began by justifying his Junta's coup of March 1976, reviewing the political and economic chaos of the period, and emphasizing that military had been forced to fill power vacuum left by failure of constitutional mechanisms to resolve ^{crises} ~~crises~~. First and most important task was battle against subversion, but military victory over subversion was not only goal of military. Videla said "Permanent goal...is that of establishing a true, durable political order based on the values of freedom, equality, justice and security." While subversive action has been markedly reduced, it is still capable of random acts, and GOA will continue anti-subversive effort "...irrespective of the form it may adopt."

4. Moving to second priority effort of last year, Videla reviewed economic difficulties of coup period and subsequent partial recovery. He cited as basic the success in "...preventing unemployment and loss of international confidence." He recognized "stoicism" of poor during last year, and attitude of those who produced, invested and paid taxes. In only approach to harshness

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in speech, however, he castigated lack of social responsibility of some who "...despite their power of decision over goods and resources provided by the nation, ...are the ones who are not supporting the country and encouraging the possibility of great profits and hope that inflation will never end." Toughest line in speech was: "The armed forces will not tolerate those who, by enjoying their own life, do not honor the sacrifice of our heroes."

5. Videla drew Solomonic line by setting as economic goal "... a permanent compromise between the advantages of development and the equitable personal and regional distribution of the benefits of this development." Strong agricultural expansion must balance industrial growth, with private sector having responsibility for areas not vital to national security.

6. "Clear-cut goals" of military are "reorganization of economy, improved functioning of state, new development style, recovery of morality and confidence." Three stages in journey are period of reorganization now substantially complete, period of creation of ideas and consensus on new political and economic structures now beginning, and final period of national unity with implication of return to democratic civilian government. Key to second period is statement: "Formulation of proposal to country is fundamental task which armed forces will have to undertake in period of creation." This "...may lead to a civilian-military agreement." This proposal, however,

does not "...imply the existence of an electoral schedule."

It will include initiation of a dialogue to allow widespread participation in development of ideas--"We are willing to listen, and listening presupposes dialogue."

7. To complete period of creation, military will have to accomplish: first, complete eradication of subversion; second, restructuring of relationship between individuals and community; third, modernization both in ideas and men, paving road for new leaders; fourth, development and implementation of legal instruments to revitalize political institutions of nation; fifth, modification of political practices and procedures for selection of leaders. Only on completion of these steps will institution of democratic regime reflecting joint desires of armed forces and representative civilian sectors be possible.

8. Videla ended by admitting possibility of unintentional mistakes and efforts in work carried on so far (generally interpreted as reference to human rights), and giving assurances that military not motivated by lust for power or desire to remain in power forever. They will stay, however, until their goals are recognized and guaranteed.

9. COMMENT. Press response has been favorable, with some cautious comment, but at this writing there have been few meaningful editorials or other response from politicians or public. Speech was not anticipated with bated breath, and not heard with alarm or even great interest, which may have been more

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or less what Videla intended. Comment which we offered in reftel on anniversary statement of Junta applies equally to Videla speech. Military have left themselves uncommitted to any precise timetable or to any clearly defined ideological path. Within guidelines laid down by Videla there is margin for almost anything, and goals are so broadly defined that they can be declared accomplished in any time period ranging from a year or two to several generations; "restructuring relationships" between Argentines will be an open-ended task at best. On balance, only clear conclusion to be drawn is that Videla and the moderates remain in control, committed to re-establishing in Argentine something resembling the sincere if shaky efforts at achievement of democracy of the past, and unwilling to contemplate taking Argentina off to the extremes of either the political and economic Right or Left.

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D-24-2012

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

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A-32

HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State

FROM : Amembassy BUENOS AIRES

DATE: March 24, 1977

SUBJECT : An End to "The Time of Silence"

REF :

SUMMARY. President Videla's March 6 reference to a termination of "the time for silence" inspired considerable speculation about Argentina's political future. For the moment, the armed forces probably have in mind simply broader consultations with representatives of various social sectors. Neither the civilian politicians nor the public is demanding much more, and from the government's point of view, a limited "opening" may help stem a dangerous tendency toward the isolation of the armed forces in power.

1. During his March 6 return flight from a state visit to Peru, President Videla told reporters that "the time for silence is ending" and that during 1977 consultations would be undertaken with political leaders and representatives of other sectors. These consultations, according to the President, would be part of a search for "political definition," and would mark a new phase of the National Reorganization program which he termed the "phase of creativity."

2. Videla's statements were warmly welcomed in the news media. Speculation as to their significance would have been normal under any circumstances, but it was further encouraged by the fact that his comments coincided with a flurry of activity connected with the approaching anniversary of the March 24, 1976 coup: all three armed services have held separate meetings at the general officers level to evaluate the first year of military government; the junta has made its appraisal based upon the reports of the three services; church authorities have drafted a confidential report that will soon be presented to the junta; rumors have circulated freely, although apparently without foundation, concerning impending changes in government structure ("fourth man" theme) and cabinet personnel (especially Martinez de Hoz and/or his chief aides); and labor leaders discussed (but rejected) making another attempt at convoking a plenum before March 24.

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FORM 4-62 DS-323

Contents and Classification Approved by:

A/POL COLINS-AG Freeman

DCM: MChaplin WC MB: RCH 11

POL: [Signature]

DocId: 32362000 Page 66

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Buenos Aires A-32

3. We have been told that Videla's airborne remarks were a slip on his part, but an indirect source in the presidential secretariat claims that last week's army meeting endorsed the president's call for a dialogue. The consensus of journalistic, political and official comment we have heard and read supports our own view that the government does not have in mind a "political opening" in the sense of a quickened, purposeful move toward restoration of civilian political participation in the government. Despite the lack of specifics as to the form and substance of the proposed consultations, we believe that the government's plans do not include (a) any kind of elections whatsoever; (b) discussions with political parties per se (as opposed to individuals who are politicians); or (c) a timetable for renewed civilian political participation.

4. Interior Minister Harguindeguy sounded quite categorical on these points when he offered his "personal interpretation" of Videla's remarks. On March 17, after the Army's general officers meeting, Harguindeguy told reporters that the end of "the time for silence" meant that the "phase of creativity" would evolve with individual contributions from patriotic, talented and intelligent Argentines: "I do not interpret the president's comments to mean that the closing of the period of silence in any way signifies initiation of a dialogue with political groups."

5. The great majority of Argentines, including most civilian politicians, are neither surprised nor particularly disappointed that the junta is not considering a return to the norms of civilian politics in the near future. On the contrary, they appear to be satisfied with the prospect of having their views considered by the government. Peronists and Radicals have told us that their parties are totally unprepared for electoral participation. Argentine workers are primarily concerned about their salaries and standard of living, and, for them, an immediate return to civilian government is not an issue that raises much ardor at this point. The track record of Argentina's current group of civilian politicians, and particularly their shabby performance during the pre-coup period, does not inspire confidence on the part of most Argentines.

6. In the past year, the junta has quietly and informally consulted informed and influential citizens, and the "opening" to which Videla referred may simply involve intensifying, publicizing and institutionalizing this practice. If so, it would be the type of cautious, limited step typical of this government; a measure designed to suggest progress in the political field but one devoid of explicit promises as to outcomes. Certain sectors within the government have undoubtedly conceived more involved and detailed proposals for an eventual shift from military to civilian rule. For now, however, these exercises amount to contingency planning rather than the drafting of proposals for near-term implementation.

7. The decision to initiate a "political opening" of any kind is important evidence that the junta and the armed forces are sensitive to the danger that the military in power may become, or be widely perceived as, isolated from the remainder of society. Among other things, the government's human rights record and its refusal to provide the media with information on what transpires

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in government councils are contributing to the image of a government going its own way, oblivious to public opinion and concerns. That is an image that the government can ill afford, and one that it may be trying to correct through broader consultations with representative Argentines.

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February 10, 1977

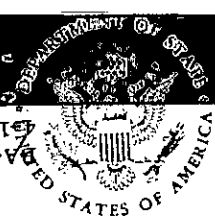
TO: The Ambassador
THRU: POLCOUNS:WSSmith *WSS*
FROM: Yvonne Thayer *Y*
SUBJECT: Zumwalt-Thayer Telecon of Feb. 10, 1976

File
to

In reply to Feb. 10 telephone inquiry from Admiral Zumwalt to the Ambassador concerning Argentine national Monica Mignone, I spoke with the Admiral's daughter Anne Zumwalt the afternoon of Feb. 10. I told her that Monica Mignone had been abducted from her parents' home in May and that despite considerable efforts on the part of her family and friends, Embassy inquiries at the Foreign Ministry and a personal appeal by Congressman Drinan to the Ministries of Justice, Interior and Foreign Relations in Buenos Aires in November, no information had ever turned up concerning her whereabouts or welfare. I mentioned our personal contacts with the father Emilio Mignone in Buenos Aires and added that he had been in to see EC/ARA officer Fred Rondon at the State Department on January 28. I told her that Mr. Mignone still had no word of his daughter as of that date, but gave her Mr. Rondon's office phone in case she wished to get further information or try to contact Mr. Mignone if he is still in Washington.

She asked me specifically what Congressman Drinan did on behalf of Miss Mignone and I replied that the Congressman asked for information on Miss Mignone directly from high ranking officials in the Ministries of Justice, Interior and Foreign Relations. The officials insisted they had made a careful check into the case but had turned up nothing, she had simply "disappeared." Miss Zumwalt said she was not aware of the Mignone case but that someone she could not identify asked her father to see what he could do in the matter. Her father had already left for Europe but she was to turn over the Embassy's information to Admiral William Thompson. I told her that the Ambassador sent his personal regards to Admiral Zumwalt and wanted to wish him well on his trip, which she said she would convey to her father. I added that should the Embassy learn anything new on the Mignone case, we would be sure to advise the Admiral. She thanked me for my assistance.

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Department of State

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INDICATE:
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Declassified Case: DX- 82862 Date: 10-24-2013

DISTRIBUTION

ACTION:

GDS
SHUM PINS PFOR AR US
Argentine Reactions to Human Rights Issue

ACTION: SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO: AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ BUENOS AIRES 2053

REFS: (a) Buenos Aires 1852, (b) Buenos Aires 1896

disappointed and angered

1. SUMMARY. High-ranking GOA officials are shaken, by our action.

They resent our inability to appreciate their view that their vicious conflict requires "special tactics" and final solutions.

They fear that anything less than total annihilation of the terrorists will spell a resurgence of the threat when the country returns to normal civil rule. We see no evidence that they are prepared to cede to external pressures in the foreseeable future.

At best they may be inclined to a cosmetic toning down of the abuses in order to assuage international criticism. Our lines of communication to the government are still open and they want to minimize the damage to bilateral relations. "The people"

AMB
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ECOM
USIS
USDAO
MILGP2
STAT
RF
CHRON

COWS

DRAFTED BY: A/POLCOUNS:AGFreeman: jr	DRAFTING DATE 3/16/77	TEL. EXT. 121	APPROVED BY: AMB:RCH11
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CLEARANCES:

POL/R: JSears *two*
MILGP: ColTart *ret*
DAO: ColCoughlin *pac*
A.DCM: GHuey *get*

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appear ambivalent on the issue, hoping to ^{avoid being involved.} ~~stay clear of the tax~~
~~way~~ Businessmen, Argentine and American alike, are the most
outspoken critics of our policy. A handful of human rights
activists who deal directly with the victims and their families
support us, but not openly. Others who abhor the government's
repressive methods nevertheless suspect our motives, see us
acting for egocentric reasons and equally condemn a policy of
sanctions. END SUMMARY.

2. Government officials are hurt and are still assessing the
repercussions of our action. They feel ^{let down.} ~~betrayed~~. Their reaction
is shaped by the conviction that in fighting for their own
survival they also have been defending western values--and,
coincidentally, US interests. It is further influenced by the
fact that significant sectors in the armed forces see Argentina's
^{previous} ~~traditional~~ tilt toward Europe as an historical error and view
their government as having initiated a process of ^{solidifying} ~~building~~
primary ties to the US. They do not comprehend how US interests
possibly could be served through a violent takeover of Argentina
by armed bands of loosely Marxist or nihilistic Argentine youth
whose leaders originally were trained in Cuba. Although they
have not asked for US material aid in dealing with the terrorist
problem, they feel that they deserve our moral support and not
this unkind blow from what they thought was a friendly power.

3. The casual manner in which the FMS cut was announced, the
unflattering comparison with Ethiopia, and the apparent US

double standard vis-a-vis South Korea and the Philippines further wounded their pride and heightened their anger. However, they carefully calibrated their response, because they wish to minimize damage to bilateral relations, if possible. They resisted the temptation to mount a demagogic political campaign against us because it would not serve their interests.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

4. There has been little perceptible reaction from the general public, one way or the other, perhaps because its primary concern is with domestic economic problems; perhaps because among the naturally apathetic Argentines the prevailing attitude seems to be "I'm all right, /~~but~~," as long as it is some other fellow whose rights are being violated. The reactions of special interest groups, however, vary considerably:

(a) Argentine "estancieros", ~~and Argentine businessmen~~ leisure class oligarchs and some foreign ambassadors

among the most vitriolic in condemning the US action. ~~The~~ American businessmen are also very upset. They ~~have~~ see our human rights policy as having evolved in a vacuum filled by impractical people with strange political ideas, or worse, for which the businessmen particularly blame themselves for not having presented their own assessment of the Argentine situation to Congress more effectively. Put another way, they feel that the USG did not sort out US interests in Argentina realistically before taking the action we took. They fear that their business interests ~~are being~~

an Argentine backlash.
soldiers will suffer from a deterioration of Argentine-US relations.

(b) What correspondence we have received has been uniformly critical, with one exception--a letter from an anonymous source whose next of kin disappeared at the hands of the security forces and who saw our action as a blow "for democracy." Individual churchmen and other human rights activists warmly endorsed our actions. Christian-oriented (CLAT) trade unionists who have built their careers on attacking US policies suddenly are warm and friendly. "Verticalist" Peronist labor politicians cynically are bemused by the controversy. They secretly are pleased to see us in a confrontation with the government, but take the view that the Montoneros are getting what they deserve. They probably would join any government attempt to demagogically exploit jingoistic or xenophobic impulses against us on this issue. However, we have noted that the previously existing tendency among labor leaders to distinguish sharply between trade union prisoners and subversive suspects appears to be breaking down; independent or neo-Peronist labor leaders are now more inclined to share our concern over human rights, but not in public.

(c) The attitude of "BA Herald" director Robert Cox is of special note because of his record of outspokenness on human rights. (Unfortunately his readership is very limited.) Cox believes we are pursuing the right policy for the wrong reasons, and he bitterly opposes the sanctions approach. He sees our human

rights advocacy as an outgrowth of a guilt complex over Viet Nam and judges it a latter-day version of our traditional imperialistic impulse, i.e. just another empty-headed attempt to project our problems onto the world scene and impose our value systems on other peoples without due regard or much attention to their problems. His opposition to sanctions stems from a conviction that they not only do not work but are actually counterproductive.

(d) The views of other journalists are relevant here. Quite a few see the US stress on human rights as a cool Machiavelian calculation aimed primarily at the Soviet Union, with little concern for the impact on Latin America since this region has always come last in terms of US interests. Another writer, however, sees President Carter as a tragic Wilsonian figure doomed to failure because of his alleged unidimensional emphasis on moral concerns to the detriment of standard, traditional US interests.

5. Unlike the 1940s blow-up over "Braden or Peron," the key impact which has to be measured is that on the elite force most likely to control the country's destiny for the foreseeable future--the military. A siege mentality prevails in the military and in the upper levels of government. The terrorist problem literally has been a life or death matter for military men, policemen and their families. In an attempt to explain "their side" of the story, we have found high-ranking military

contacts to be unusually and brutally frank about their aims and objectives in the last two weeks. We believe the official GOA denial that human rights violations take place is a bare-faced attempt at stonewalling the problem. The accusation that our FMS action is attributable to our ignorance of the situation in Argentina is merely official shorthand for expressing their distress over our disagreement with their methods. They say they are in a dirty, fratricidal war with an enemy who strikes in the dark and who occasionally turns out to be one's own son or daughter. Such a conflict requires special methods and a "final solution," they say. There can be only one objective, i.e. to liquidate the terrorists. If the military is eventually to return the country to civilian hands, it cannot afford to have large numbers of unrehabilitated terrorists languishing in the jails. Another Campora could come along and let them out and then the problem would start all over again. Therefore, they say, US sanctions cannot alter what they feel they must do and how they must do it. What they want us to believe is that by our actions we are merely aiding and abetting a common enemy. Inasmuch as the economic recovery of the country is deemed essential to destroying the terrorists' recruitment base /base, they argue that US economic sanctions especially would contribute to the terrorist cause. (We find it particularly disturbing that the estimate of how long it will take to eradicate the terrorist problem keeps on extending. An

admiral close to Massera told us last week that the Navy's estimate is now two years.)

6. There seems to be no basic disagreement between the so-called "moderates" and "hardliners" within the government with respect to these objectives. Videla may wish to tone down the excesses for public and international consumption, but there is no evidence that he wants or is able to do more than this. Quite the contrary, we have SRF reports which suggest that Videla, although concerned about increasing attacks from the US and the Vatican, sees no way other than pursuing the anti-terrorist campaign to its bitter end. We doubt that anything less than widescale, popular discontent with the government's repressive measures could induce it ~~into~~ suspending the most blatant and objectionable abuses. Even then they might easily be frightened into merely escalating the scale of repressions. At any rate, we do not see sufficient domestic discontent developing on this issue in the near future.

7. CONCLUSIONS:

(a) The way in which the FMS cut was announced wounded them. It convinced them that the USG considers Argentina unimportant and a country which can be singled out for punishment with impunity.

(b) The action was seen as a sanction--punishment by the USG, and not as disengagement or avoiding identification with the Argentine military regime.

~~QA: (As the Foreign Minister himself said, our relations~~

(FonMin himself said relations between US and Argentina had never been close. It was clear however that such warming in relations as had taken place over past year had now suffered a significant setback.)

(c) We see no indication that the reduction of FMS has had any positive effect on GOA thinking about their counter-terrorist tactics, having polled opinion at high levels in all three services on this.

(d) Alternate approaches: Recent research on the terrorist mentality collected by USIA has produced some insights which have been useful in dealing with terrorist incidents. Looking at the other side of the matter, we believe that the effects of terrorism on its victims produce attitudes which do not respond positively/~~to~~^{to} simple disapproval or punishment. We believe that if we are to be successful in improving GOA observance of human rights we must come up with policies which take into account the real fears (reasonable or not) of the officials of this government. As we go into the PARM cycle we shall be exploring these ideas further.


HILL

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Declassified Case: NW 52968 Date:
10-24-2013

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

Handwritten signature: Harry Benjamin
Handwritten initials: H

DATE: November 5, 1976

TO : Ambassador Hill
THRU : W. W. Hitchcock - CONS *WWD*
THRU : M. Chaplin - DCM *MC*
FROM : G. J. Whitman - CONS *W*

SUBJECT: Arrest Case of Patricia Ann Erb

On November 4, 1976 Mr. and Mrs. John Delbert Erb visited the Embassy to provide additional details concerning the arrest and detention of their daughter, Patricia Ann Erb, in Buenos Aires on September 13, 1976. Mrs. Erb traveled with Patricia to the United States and has recently returned to Buenos Aires. Mrs. Erb and Patricia also spoke to Fred Rondon in Elkhart, Indiana in greater detail than is related here.

Mrs. Erb stated that, contrary to her daughter's previous declarations, Patricia had been systematically tortured for several days after her abduction. According to Mrs. Erb, Patricia initially refused to provide her captors with information on her activities in the "Juventud Guevarista". The torture ceased after she prepared and signed a statement outlining these activities and naming the other members of her cell.

Patricia was also made to sign a statement promising not to tell the Embassy about her treatment. She was repeatedly told that if she did so, members of her family would be killed.

Mrs. Erb was reluctant to go into detail regarding Patricia's torture. She stated, however, that Patricia had been beaten with a revolving stick device that left no marks or bruises. Her head was submerged in a tub of water until she started to ingest its contents. The treatment was repeated using human excrement. She was subjected to electric shocks on her breasts, genitals and other parts of her body. She finally "confessed" on the "electric bed", a "wired" wire mattress on which she was placed, nude, and doused with water. She was not raped, although an attempt was made by one of the guards. She said that the attempted rape was not part of the "official treatment" and that she thought the guard would have been severely reprimanded if he were caught.

Mrs. Erb stated that Patricia is experiencing adverse psychological effects as a result of her detention. She has difficulty sleeping and often wakes up crying or screaming. She is now under psychiatric treatment. Patricia intends to remain in Elkhart, Indiana with relatives and plans to study nursing.



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The Erbs want no protests using Patricia's name for fear of reprisals to the family in Buenos Aires. They also expressed their profound gratitude to the Embassy for our efforts on behalf of their daughter.

CC: WSmith - POL
GSBeckett - RSO
RScherrer - LEGATT
Col. Coughlin - DAO

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FROM
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CLASSIFICATION
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EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, SREF, PORG, AR
SUBJECT: ARGENTINE REQUEST FOR US SUPPORT IN UN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

ACTION: SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY
USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

INFO : AmEmbassy OTTAWA

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ BUENOS AIRES 0532

- ✓ AMB
- DCM
- POL
- POL/R
- MILGP
- DAO
- USIS
- CHRON

1. SUMMARY: GOA has requested US support in February 7 meeting in Geneva of UN Commission on Human Rights which will consider resolution critical of Argentine treatment of refugees. GOA claims it has treated refugees in accordance with existing agreements and that local office of UNHCR will so report to Commission. Embassy recommends Department give careful consideration of acceding to GOA request with appropriate conditions. END SUMMARY

2. On January 19 Acting Undersecretary ForOffice called in DCM to present Aide Memoire which requests USG support in February 7 Geneva meeting of UN Human Rights Commission. This meeting will consider a draft

DRAFTED BY: 2 DCM:MChaplin	DRAFTING DATE 1/21/77	TEL. EXT. 180	CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED BY: AMB:RCHill
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resolution prepared in August 1976 by the 29th meeting of the sub-commission on discrimination and persecution of minorities. Draft resolution was apparently highly critical of Argentina and FornOff provided a copy of Argentine Ambassador's speech rejecting it before sub-commission. Aide Memoire rejects this resolution, states that it is of interest to the Argentine Government that the Commission on Human Rights not continue to debate the draft, and restates the firm objective of GOA to assure respect for human rights, as well as the solution of the problem of refugees in Argentina. Finally, it states "... consequently this Ministry would be grateful for the support of your government with the objective that this subject not be debated by the Commission on Human Rights and thus avoid the adoption of a resolution which ~~XXXXXX~~ would not be positive and that, on the contrary, would affect the friendly relations which ought to exist between members of the international community. This Ministry would hope to know the answer to its request stated above before the next meeting of the Commission on Human Rights."

3. Acting Subsecretary SANTOJANNA was assisted by Director of North American Affairs ESPECHE and

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new head of Human Rights Working Group, Juan Carlos ARLIA, who carried burden of presentation. They stated that refugees in Argentina were currently being treated with strict accordance with existing international agreements and that local office of UNHCR would so testify to Commission. They also observed that a long-term mission of International Red Cross was currently in the country and had complete freedom of access to all detention centers. They asserted that the draft resolution contains false and objectionable allegations about the situation in Argentina and failed to recognize the enormous efforts made by GOA to deal with massive problem of illegal immigrants and refugees. They hoped that Commission action at February 7 meeting could be limited to a statement taking note of Argentine efforts to solve refugee problem and express satisfaction on progress made.

4. Our soundings indicate UK, Canadian and Cuban Embassies have been presented with identical requests and also received a hard sell by FornOff. Muller of UNHCR firmly asserts he does not know position to be taken by UNHCR in its report to Commission. His assessment is that situation has improved over past six months. That view coincides with Embassy impression.

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5. Our Canadian colleagues report that US is not a member of the Commission this year and that Canada representing the group of countries which includes the US. FornOff officials stated their firm belief that US is a current member, and appeal made on that basis. Assuming Canadians are correct, GOA would assume that USG could be sufficiently persuasive to influence Canadian vote.

6. FornOff initiative is unusual and could present an attractive opportunity. Presentation by senior FornOff officials was remarkable for depth of emotion about Argentina getting ~~XXXX~~ fair treatment in international forum and for the intense concern over Argentina's international image. Previously we have felt that GOA has not really been deeply concerned over its image abroad beyond that held by foreign lenders, but GOA is giving all the signals that February 7 meeting is important to it. We think many GOA officials believe that they have been dealing with refugees in good faith and are proud of it.

7. This situation could have the elements of an opportunity to promote improved observance of human rights in Argentina. Provided report of UNHCR

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is at least modestly encouraging, and other members of US group could be persuaded to go along, vote to kill draft resolution might be coupled to Commission action to review more closely general human rights situation, possibly including visit to Argentina. If GOA wants to kill draft resolution enough, it might agree to cooperate with a visit.

8. Embassy hopes the Department will be able to provide some indication of US position by February 4, so that FornOff can be informed.

HILL

Cleared by phone

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE TELEGRAM

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 CHARGE TO

E.O. 11652: TAGS: SUBJECT: ACTION:	FROM Ambassy Buenos Aires	CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED
	N/A PFOR, SHUM, AR, US <i>Holtzman</i> Delivery of Congressional Letter !! Secstate WASHDC UNCLASSIFIED - BUENOS AIRES REF: (A) Buenos Aires 6575; (B) State 251209 Embassy would appreciate Office of Congressional Relations notifying drafters of letter mentioned in reftel (A) that letter has been delivered to the Foreign Office for forwarding to addressee.	

AMB
DCM
POL-3

RF
CHRON

7
should have mentioned the specific letter
ll

HILL
H

DRAFTED BY: AMB: RCH: b1r	DRAFTING DATE 10/22/76	TEL. EXT. 120	CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED BY: AMB: RCHill <i>By How</i>
CLEARANCES:			DCM: MChaplin <i>nic</i>

UNCLASSIFIED

Oct. 22, '76

note

Mr. Ambassador

Prepare cable
think it - do not
give date

Mrs. Hill mentioned to me this morning the Holtzmann letter. I spoke with POL secretaries twice, and then to Wayne. They had told him what you asked me to pass on--that a cable should be sent to the Congresswoman via H, etc. When I talked to Wayne, he said he would speak with you about this as he did not think a cable was necessary. F.O., I took it for granted he mentioned it to you in one of your various conversations.

say
for answer
to be
delivered
to the
F.O.
for delivery
to P.M.

have had too many agreements
with H.B.G. not to confer
→

Leota