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INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI *ZB*

SUBJECT: Your Remark That Argentine Improvements
in Human Rights Should be Acknowledged

The State Department has prepared a short report (Tab A) ² assessing the significance of Argentine President Videla's recent steps (on June 14) to improve the country's human rights image. Our mission in Argentina and the Department suggest that these steps -- the release of 342 persons, the processing of 1,000 cases, the reexamination of the right of exile -- should be "viewed cautiously." Nonetheless, the Department has sent a cable ³ which instructs our Embassy to acknowledge and express our continued interest and encouragement for these and other steps which improve the human rights picture in Argentina. The State Department also requested further information on whether the announced steps have been taken.

A recent cable summarizing President Videla's trip to Uruguay ⁴ appears to reinforce the conclusion that we should be more cautious about accepting announcements of reforms by the Latin American military governments at face value. At his press conference at the conclusion of his visit, Videla backed away from recent statements on democracy and instead said that his government has no fixed timetable for the installation of a democratic form of government.

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